ON THIS DATE IN BAHÁ'Í FAITH

May

211 Historical Entries

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1 May 1. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi addressed a cablegram to the Bahá'í Annual Convention of the United States and Canada, appealing to the assembled guests to begin the systematic implementation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision expressed in the "Tablets of the Divine Plan."

2 May 1. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia." Bahá'u'lláh wrote the "Tablet of Maqṣúd" on January 20, 1882.

3 May 1. On this date in 1961, Kanichi Yamamoto, the first Japanese Bahá’í, died in Berkeley, California.

4 May 1. On this date in 1848, a letter from Iran in French was published in the Journal de Constantinople, marking one of the earliest mentions of the Bab in a Western language publication. This occurred before the June 1848 Conference of Badasht.

5 May 1. On this date in 1953, the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, was consecrated in a simple ceremony for Bahá’ís only. For details, please read the article titled "Jubilee at Wilmette" by Marzieh Gail, on page 152 of The Bahá’í World, Volume 12.

6 May 1. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Although it is good not to provoke conventional people too much, on the other hand, we must not allow them to come between us and obeying Bahá'u'lláh; and we know that He has instructed His servants to spread His Message.... "

7 May 2. On this date in 1943, Narayenrao Rangnath Shethji, the first known Hindu convert to the Bahá'í Faith, died.

8 May 2. On this date in 1953, the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette was dedicated.

9 May 2. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "The enemies in Palestine are the Muslims, Christians, Mohammed Ali's party... This opposition will gradually increase and spread to the Church of England and afterwards will affect the Catholic religion and will bring the downfall of the Pope."

10 May 2. On this date in 1863, Bahá'u'lláh announced to his close companions in the Najibiyyih gardens his mission, marking the start of the Bahá'í Faith as distinct from Bábism. The twelve days Bahá'u'lláh spent in the Najibiyyih gardens is commemorated annually by Bahá’ís as the festival of Riḍván

11 May 2. On this date in 1916, Lua Getsinger died unexpectedly at the age of forty-three of heart failure while in Egypt. A prominent Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, he also titled her "Herald of the Covenant" and "Mother Teacher of the West."

12 May 3. On this date in 1967, Elizabeth Hopper, a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for pioneering to the Madeira Islands, died.

13 May 3. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation."

14 May 3. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi launched the Ten Year Crusade, whose end was timed to coincide with 100th anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of his position to his close companions in the Najibiyyih garden. Shoghi Effendi died before seeing the end of the Ten Year Crusade.

15 May 3. On this date in 1980, Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts stated "the only hope, the only light in the world is the light of Bahá'u'lláh...the pioneers have been telling us for years...We have it, and the only way that they're going to get it is for us to go and give it to them..."

16 May 3. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "now is not the time to translate the teachings into German from Persian and Arabic. No Persian with a sufficient expert knowledge of German is available to help in this matter...These you can better translate from good English editions."

17 May 3. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Johanna von Werthern "with your enthusiasm and that of the other dear friends, it will not be long before a flourishing Bahá'í Community exists" in Innsbruck and "that the prestige of our beloved Faith is directly involved with" the Temple in German

18 May 3. On this date in 1914, Shoghi Effendi, a student in Beirut, wrote "Going back to our college activities our Bahá'í meetings, which I have spoken to you about, are reorganized and only today we are sending letters, enclosing glad tidings of the Holy Land, to the Bahá'í Assemblies in ..."

19 May 3. On this date in 1932, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "... activities in teaching the Cause and interesting distinguished persons always bring him much joy and pleasure...One day the Cause will pass the threshold of their consciousness and they will become completely converted."

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20 May 3. On this date in 1954, Leroy Ioas wrote that "The Guardian has been greatly pleased with the manner in which the Faith has been spreading in Japan...The future of the Faith in Japan is very great...it will bring the light of guidance to all parts of Japan in a very short time."

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21 May 4. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963."

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22 May 4. On this date in 1954, Elizabeth Stamp became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh when she arrived in St. Helena. Born in Bagenalstown, Ireland on March 25, 1887, she emigrated to the United States becoming a US citizen and residing in New York City where she became a Bahá'í in 1939.

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23 May 4. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi appointed Sylvia Ioas to the International Bahá'í Council, serving both as an appointed and elected member. She was the wife of Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas, who accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their ...

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24 May 4. On this date in 1972, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Uganda "regarding the inscription on a headstone...not to use any form of the Greatest Name but a nine-pointed star may be used...The position of the body in the grave should be with the feet pointing toward the Qiblih, which is Bahji in Akka."

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25 May 4. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote an NSA "regarding contact through the Internet between the friends and Covenant-breaker groups...Any plans that you have to alert the friends to Covenant-breaker activity on the Internet should, of course, be undertaken with wisdom and discretion so ..."

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26 May 4. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "If the friends always waited until they were fully qualified to do any particular task, the work of the Cause would be almost at a standstill! But the very act of striving to serve, however unworthy one may feel, attracts the blessings of God ..."

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27 May 4. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...a sound knowledge of history, including religious history, and also of social and economic subjects, is of great help in teaching the Cause to intelligent people..."

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28 May 4. On this date in 1992, the UHJ wrote the Trustee of Huqúqu'lláh 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá a question "whether the property on which a person is obliged to compute his Huqúqu'lláh is all that he possesses at the date on which the Law becomes applicable to him, or only on such property as he amasses.

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29 May 4. On this date in 1926, the Toronto Daily Star published an open letter from Queen Marie of Romania about the Bahá'í Faith. While Bahá'í sources claim Queen

Marie was the first monarch to convert to the faith, her daughter Ileana denied any such conversion had taken place.

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30 May 5. On this date in 1850 the Bábis of Zanjan rose in arms against the Qajar governor of the town.

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31 May 5. On this date in 2012, a parent of a homosexual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a "struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings" with their personal views.

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32 May 5. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "'Abdu'l-Bahá said that that the site of the manger in Bethlehem is the only authentic Christian site in Palestine....Jerusalem will be the last stronghold of Christianity. There are very powerful forces now at work there allied with the government."

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33 May 5. On this date in 1957, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "he is surprised that you should have been advised by fellow-Bahá'ís that you could have a Christian marriage...you will lose your voting rights."

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34 May 5. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'ís must, in view of the condition of the world today, stand forth firmly and courageously as followers of Bahá'u'lláh, obeying His Laws, and seeking to build his World Order. Through compromise we will never be able to establish our ..."

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35 May 5. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "No one has any right to see the Covenant-Breakers without the permission of the N.S.A....in doing so should realize she is putting herself in contact with a dangerous, contagious, spiritual disease, as the Master pointed out over and over again!"

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36 May 5. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi cabled "The hour is ripe to disencumber themselves of worldly vanities, to mount the steed of steadfastness, unfurl the banner of renunciation, don the armor of utter consecration to God's Cause, gird themselves with the girdle of a chaste and ..."

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37 May 5. On this date in 1960, in the wake of the NSA of France's acceptance of Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship, the Hands of the Cause of in the Holy Land sent a letter to the NSA announcing the visit of Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qasim Faizi. The NSA would be declared Covenant-breakers.

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38 May 5. On this date in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson sent a telegram to the US National Bahá'í Convention expressing his "gratitude to all concerned." Wilson principles were lauded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. An avowed foreign interventionist, imperialist, and Social Darwinist who ...

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39 May 5. On this date in 1964, Richard Nolen died. He was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Azores.

40 May 5. On this date in 1943, a letter written in behalf of Shoghi Effendi said "The friends should by all means be encouraged to withdraw from church membership and be made to realize that ..."

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41 May 6. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that it is not appropriate to set obligatory prayers to music.

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42 May 6. On this date in 1857, Charles Greenleaf, a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born. He would serve on the all-male Chicago House of Spirituality, which was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching. When today's Spiritual Assemblies become Houses of Justice, they will once more ....

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43 May 6. On this date in 1984, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum began her 17 day tour of South Korea.

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44 May 6. On this date in 1936, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "What the Guardian feels it of vital importance for the friends to do is to teach the Cause directly and by means of imparting the Holy Words...."

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45 May 6. On this date in 2001, The Bahá'í World Centre Department of the Secretariat addressed a letter to an individual believer concerning "Defending the Cause against Opponents on the Internet."

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46 May 7. On this date in 1963, the Universal House of Justice sent its second message, which it addressed to National Conventions.

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47 May 7. On this date in 1940, a letter from Shoghi Effendi noted a new translation of "Epistle To the Son of the Wolf", noting such changes as "'Fear of God' has apparently been deliberately changed in some cases into 'Love of God'."

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48 May 7. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi sent a fragment of the plaster from the room of the Báb in the Fortress of Maku to Australia to be set in the foundations of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

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49 May 7. On this date in 1955, the Iranian army occupied the National Bahá'í Centre in Tehran.

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50 May 7. On this date in 2016, Jenabe Esslemont Caldwell died in Wailuku, Hawaii. Born on August 7, 1926 in Butte, Montana, he and his wife Elaine were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Aleutian Islands in July, 1953

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51 May 7. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "to the Bahá'ís of the World" publicly announcing the conversion of Malietoa Tanumafili II

to the Bahá’í Faith, becoming to the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to do so.

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52 May 7. On this date in 1980, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Germany in response to their letter concerning a newspaper's publishing a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer authored "Desinformation als Methode" as a refutation to Ficicchia's "Der Bahá'ismus"

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53 May 7. On this date in 1976, Saichiro Fujita, the second Japanese to become a Bahá'í, died in Haifa, Israel.

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54 May 8. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Deep as are family ties, we must always remember that the spiritual ties are far deeper; they are everlasting and survive death, whereas physical ties, unless supported by spiritual bonds, are confined to this life."

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55 May 8. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Bahá'í children and youth of Peoria that "The whole world is suffering, it is sunk in misery, crushed beneath its heavy problems. The task of healing its ills and building up its future devolves mainly upon the youth."

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56 May 8. On this date in 1996, a Bahá'í addressed the Universal House of Justice an email "regarding questions raised about the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecy of Daniel concerning 1,335 days, as well as modifications made to 'Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era.'"

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57 May 8. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "Nationalism and militarism are all instruments which God is utilizing for the use of His purpose. This turmoil is a preparation. The coming war will weld the nations into a Kingdom of God. The Bahá'ís are preparing the way at present for this..."

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58 May 8. On this date in 1902, William Sutherland Maxwell wed May Ellis Bolles in London. They met while William was studying architecture in Paris and May was the sister of one of his classmates. The couple hosted 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their Montreal and were the parents of Mary Sutherland Maxwell ...

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59 May 8. On this date in 1976, Amelia Bowman died. An American who pioneered to Scandinavia, during a pilgrimage to Haifa she "asked about Pakistan and the Guardian explained that though Moslem - this is no doubt temporary and will be absorbed later by the Republic of India."

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60 May 8. On this date in 1948, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "ex-communication is a spiritual thing.... Only actual enemies of the Cause are ex-communicated. On the other hand, those who conspicuously disgrace the Faith or refuse to abide by its laws can be deprived, as a ..."

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61 May 8. On this date in 2005, the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center denied a complaint filed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States against the Second International Bahá'í Council on the use of the domain uhj.net.

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62 May 9. On this date in 2014, the UHJ addressed a letter to an individual believer, stating in part "The contemporary discussion surrounding homosexuality, which began in the West and is increasingly promoted in other parts of the world, generally takes the form of a false dichotomy, which ..."

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63 May 9. On this date in 1997, Denis MacEoin posted a letter concerning whether the Bahá'í Faith should be considered a World Religion or a New Religious Movement.

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64 May 9. On this day in 1909, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá wrote Charles Mason Remey, who, with Howard C. Struven, was the first Bahá'í to circumnavigate the world and introduce the Bahá'í Faith to Japan, saying, "Rest thou assured that the confirmations of the Blessed Perfection shall encircle thee from all sides.

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65 May 9. On this date in 1900, 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Tihrání addressed American Bahá'ís about his meetings with Ibrahim George Kheiralla who, along with Anton Haddad, had founded of the first American Bahá'í community. After a pilgrimage to Haifa, he came to believe that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in ...

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66 May 9. On this date in 2003, David Hofman, who served on the Universal House of Justice from 1963 until 1988 and before that on the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles for 27 years, died.

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67 May 10. On this date in 1902, the Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male.

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68 May 10. On this date in 1954, Ramona Allen Brown arrived in Haifa for her Bahá'í Pilgrimage. In 1904 she had converted to the Bahá'í Faith and in 1954 made a pilgrimage during which Shoghi Effendi told her "Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home."

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69 May 10. On this date in 1966, the UHJ wrote "In all cases of marriage of Bahá'ís to followers of other religions the Bahá'í has two essential obligations as regards the children: a. He must not educate or assume a vow to educate the children of the marriage in a religion other than his own...."

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70 May 10. On this date in 1849, the siege at the Shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi came to an end, with the defeat of the Bábi defenders.

71 May 10. On this date in 1960, the Custodians shared with all Hands and NSAs "the texts of the messages already received by the Hands in the Holy Land, reflecting widespread repudiation of this baseless claim, and pledging loyalty to the divinely-ordained institution of the Hands."

72 May 10. On this date in 1943, Argentine Bahá'ís dedicated a memorial at Quilmes Cemetery to May Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi's mother-in-law, who had died in Buenos Aires three years previously.

73 May 11. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "The case of Ahmad Sohrab is, for one who has had any experience of orientals and of psychology, easily understandable."

74 May 11. On this date in 1995, the International Teaching Centre wrote "of the Internet..These open unlimited possibilities for continuous proclamation and teaching, bringing the Creative Word and the Sacred Writings as well as the ideas of individual believers to hearts and mind everywhere."

75 May 11. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a letter to Marie Wilson, regarding Bahá'í gatherings at Green Acre.

76 May 11. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of ..."

77 May 11. On this date in 1941, Fuad Afnan, Shoghi Effendi's first cousin who was the son of Muhsin Afnán and Túbá Khánum, died as a result of injuries sustained in an air raid in London where he was volunteering as an Air Raid Warden. The Fuad Muhsin Afnan Memorial Fund for "Bahai students in need"

78 May 11. On this date in 1993, the Universal House of Justice wrote to a National Spiritual Assembly regarding the Sai Baba movement, stating "Bahá'ís, of course, cannot accept the claim of the founder of the movement, or his successor, that he is the equivalent of what we understand to be the..."

79 May 11. On this date in 1933, Adelbert Mühlschlegel wrote Shoghi Effendi about Bahá'í orthography, and later received the reply "it is a highly recommendable system of transliteration and this is why the Guardian is so emphatic about its univeral adoption by the Bahá'ís the world over."

80 May 11. On this date in 1995, an individual wrote a letter to the NSA of the U.S. lamenting "spin doctoring" done by the National Spiritual Assembly on the May 19, 1994 letter of the UHJ, in order to make a more favorable impression on the delegates and visitors to the National Convention.

81 May 11. On this date in 2007, Malietoa Tanumafili II died. He was the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to convert to the Bahá’í Faith.

82 May 11. On this date in 2007, Frank Leonard Wyss died. He was an Australian Bahá'í who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia in the 1950's and became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Cocos Islands.

83 May 12. On this date in 1869, Hand of the Cause of God Clara Dunn was born in London, England. She was raised in Canada and moved to the United States in 1902, where she became a Bahá'í. In 1919, along with her husband John Henry Hyde Dunn, Clara Dunn introduced the Bahá'í Faith to Australia.

84 May 12. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter to the American National Assembly later included in the book "Bahá'í Administration."

85 May 12. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi cabled Argentine Bahá'ís he was "delighted (at the) completion (and) dedication (of the) Maxwell Memorial," which was dedicated to his mother-in-law who had died there three years previously of a heart attack. Shoghi Effendi declared her a martyr.

86 May 12. On this date in 2008, the UHJ wrote "After several years of negotiations, agreement was reached with the Israeli government for the acquisition of a rectangular plot of land 90,000 square metres in area, located between Bahjí and the main road. This land was being used by the government."

87 May 13. On this date in 1896, Ugo Giachery, later a Hand of the Cause of God and member of the International Bahá'í Council, was born into an aristocratic Italian family in Palermo.

88 May 13. On this date in 1913, Harold Collis Featherstone, later named a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Quorn, Australia.

89 May 13, On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote all NSAs that Bahá'ís "make many contacts, select a few whom they feel would become Bahá'ís, develop a close friendship with them, then complete confidence, and finally teach them the Faith, until they become strong supporters of the Cause of God.

90 May 13. On this date in 1979, the UHJ wrote clarifications regarding the dates given in Bahá'í texts for the prophet Zoroaster, stating "in one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that Zoroaster lived about 750 years after Moses...'Zoroaster lived about a thousand years before Christ.'"

91 May 13. On this date in 1850, the Babi insurrection in the city of Zanjan began.

92 May 13. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Australian National Spiritual Assembly, stating Bahá'ís "must whole-heartedly accept the advice or decision of the Assembly, according to the principles already laid down for such matters in Bahá'í administration."

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93 May 13. On this date in 1912, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá said "... they shall glorify the twentieth century, saying ... the twentieth century was the century of international peace, the twentieth century was the century of divine bestowals, and the twentieth century has left traces which shall last forever."

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94 May 13. On this date in 1976, Doris Richardson, who served on the first NSA of Canada and was named a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh for pioneering to Grand Manan Island, died.

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95 May 13. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the Spiritual Assembly of Guadeloupe regarding "translations into French or Creole using simpler words than the original text"

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96 Baha'i History - May 14, 2008, Members of the Yaran, an ad hoc administrative group formed by the Baha'i Administrative Order in Iran, were arrested. On August 29, 1983 the government had banned all Bahá'í administrative activities, requiring the dissolution of about 400 LSAs and the NSA.

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97 May 14. On this date in 2009, exactly one year to the date of the arrest of the Yaran, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Iranian believers.

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98 May 14. On this date in 2011, on the third anniversary of the arrest of the Yaran, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Iranian believers.

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99 May 14. On this date in 1997, an NSA wrote the UHJ "requesting guidance concerning the attention given by the friends to postings by Covenant-breakers on the Internet" who noted "it is closely following this issue..Sites maintained by Covenant-breaker groups will have a diminishing impact.."

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100 May 14. On this date in 1982, Amoz Gibson died. He served on the UHJ from its founding in 1963 until his death. Before that served on the NSA of the U.S., an Auxiliary Board member for propagation, and a pioneer to the Navajo Indian Reservation.

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101 May 14. On this date in 1948, according to Ruth Moffett, "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters..

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102 May 14. On this date in 1948, the same day as David Ben Gurion's declaration of the State of Israel, the Arab village of al-Nuqayb, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land

and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the UN's adoption of the Partition Plan for Palestine.

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103 May 15. On this date 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "In connection with the selection of particular photographs of Abdu'l-Bahá for circulation among the friends... no definite ruling should be laid down establishing the superiority or distinction of any particular photograph."

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104 Baha'i History - May 15. On this date in 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

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105 May 15. On this date in 1874, Charles Mason Remey was born. An architect who designed three Bahá'í Houses of Worship, he was also a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian.

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106 May 15. On this date in 1845, the Báb arrived in Bushehr, having completed the Hajj pilgrimage, accompanied by a black slave named Mubárak and Quddús (Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí-i-Bárfurúshí), who was the eighteenth believer in the Báb. In Bushehr the Báb spent ten days with his eldest maternal ...

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107 May 15. On this date 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote a Tablet to Saichiro Fujita, "As regard to thy profession of electricity. Endeavor from every direction that thou mayest gain perfect efficiency in it — so that I may send for thee to come with electrical machine (automobile) and lighting plant ..."

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108 May 15. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the United states that "Regarding the age of fifteen fixed by Bahá'u'lláh: This relates only to purely spiritual functions and obligations and is not related to the degree of administrative capacity which ...."

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109 May 15. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The obligation to teach is essentially the responsibility of young believers. Their whole training should therefore be directed in such a way as to make them competent teachers. It is for this very purpose that Bahá'í summer schools, which ..."

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110 May 15. On this date in 1991, the "Baha'i Journal" published a letter from the UHJ to an individual who had expressed "puzzlement over the statement in its Ridván 1990 message referring to Bahá'u'lláh as 'the most precious Being ever to have drawn breath on this planet'."

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111 May 16. On this date in 2000, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of South Africa answering "a number of questions related to Regional Bahá’í Councils."

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112 May 16. On this date in 1849, Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí-i-Bárfurúshí (Quddús) was lynched by a mob in his hometown of Barfurúsh in the aftermath of the Bábi defeat at

the Shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi. Quddús was the 18th believer in the Báb and had accompanied him to Mecca on the Hajj pilgrimage in 1844.

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113 May 16. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote Adelbert Mühlschlegel that "whatever we say of Germany, we have to admit that its people are endowed with a spiritual vitality quite superior to many other races."

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114 May 17. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi addressed a cablegram to the Bahá'ís of the word, condemning his one-time close companion, secretary, and first cousin as "treacherous Ruhi Afnan."

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115 May 17. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...the world is being shaken to its foundations and the people are seeking. If the Bahá'ís will arise as never before to teach the Cause they will find many listeners and many will find eternal life through their sacrificial efforts."

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116 May 17. On this date in 1962, Carl Scheffler died. An American Bahá'í who served on the NSA of the U.S. & Canada, serving as Treasurer from 1926 to 1930, as Financial Secretary from 1930 to 1934, and as Vice-Chairman from 1934 to 1938. He also traveled America to teach the Bahá'í Faith.

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117 May 17. On this date in 2008, Brigitte Lundblade, who had pioneered to Sweden, Denmark and Estonia and been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, died.

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118 May 17. On this date in 2017, Firuz Kazemzadeh, retired professor emeritus of history at Yale University who served on the NSA of the US from 1963 to 2000, died at the age of 92. He was born in Moscow, USSR, to a Russian mother and Iranian father employed at the Iranian embassy in Moscow.

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119 May 17. On this date in 1886, Bahá'u'lláh's daughter Furúghiyyih married Siyyid 'Alí, an Afnán. Siyyid 'Alí sided with Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí in his conflict with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to him as 'Siyyid Mutimarid' (rebellious Siyyid). He died in 'Akká in 1916.

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120 May 18. On this date in 1910, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven, the first Bahá'ís to circumnavigate the world, on the day of their departure from his presence.

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121 May 18. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi[wrote "I strongly urge you to devote, while you are pursuing your studies, as much time as you possibly can to a thorough study of the history and Teachings of our Beloved Cause. This is the prerequisite of a future successful career of service to the...

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122 May 18. On this date in 1941, Yvonne Liegois Cuellar, a French woman married to Arturo Cuellar Echazu, a Bolivian army officer, became a Bahá'í in Bolivia. Shoghi

Effendi called her the "Mother of Bolivia". Arturo Cuellar would later become a Bahá’í in 1946 through his wife's efforts.

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123 May 18. On this date in 1948, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States stated "'Deprivation of voting rights' and 'deprivation of membership in the Bahá'í Community' are really the same thing."

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124 May 18. On this date in 1954, Ruhaniyyih Ruth Moffett arrived in Israel. She described the founding of that country six years previous as "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and ..."

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125 May 18. On this date in 1972, the Universal House of Justice sent a message to the Bahá'í Unity Conference in Ganado, Arizona.

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126 May 18. On this date in 1990, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking a number of questions, including an inquiry about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's assertion that "The century has come when all religions shall be unified."

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127 May 18. On this date in 1995, the UHJ replied to an individual asking for an "outline which aspects of current Bahá'í Administration are permanent..."; when Bahá'í Review "will no longer be needed"; and "access by individuals to source materials held in the Bahá'í International Archives."

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128 May 18. On this date in 1995, William R. Foster, a pioneer to Liberia and Morocco, died. The Foster Bahá'í School in New Jersey is named after him.

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129 May 18. On this date in in 1995, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer regarding "Suggestions about changes in the Administrative Order" that had been made on the Talisman discussion group.

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130 May 19. On this date in 1874, John Esslemont was born.

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131 May 19. On this date in 1927, James Nelson, who would become a judge who served in the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1977 to 1999, was born.

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132 May 19. On this date in 1974, the New York Times carried an article titled "The Baha'is on Long Island Reflect the Changing Image of the Sect Nationally."

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133 May 19. On this date in 1994, the UHJ wrote a letter to the NSA of the U.S., which was later accused of "spin doctoring" on the letter "in order to make a more favorable impression on the delegates and visitors to the National Convention."

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134 May 19. On this date in 1994, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the US regarding the functioning of Bahá'í Administration institutions, stating "The Counselors are members of a continental, as distinct from a national, institution, and they occupy a rank higher than that of the National Spiritual Assembly"

135 May 19. On this date in 2009, a little over one year after the arrest of the Yaran, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Iranian believers.

136 May 19. On this date in 2015, the Universal House of Justice explained "why such terms as “Alláh-u-Abhá” and “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” are used by Bahá’ís rather than being translated into their native tongues."

137 May 20. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "Among other historical women was Catherine I, wife of Peter the Great. Russia and Turkey were at war. Muhammad Páshá, commander of the Turkish forces, had defeated Peter and was about to take St. Petersburg..."

138 May 20. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "The discovery of America by Columbus was during the reign of Isabella of Spain, to whose intelligence and assistance this wonderful accomplishment was largely due."

139 May 20. On this date in 1912, "While riding in Mr Mills's automobile, the Master said: 'You will learn of the value of this automobile later because it will be said that the servants of the Blessed Beauty sat in it.'"

140 May 20. On this date in 1952, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi addressed to a Canadian Bahá'í, noted that "the Guardian was happy to learn of the success you are having in your teaching work, especially with the Jewish people."

141 May 20. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "a believer cannot escape administrative expulsion by the ruse of resigning from the Faith in order to break its law with impunity."

142 May 21. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote "No Bahá'í can any longer dissimulate his faith and practise the laws and ordinances of a previous dispensation and call himself at the same time a believer. No compromise, no vacillation can any longer be tolerated. We must have the ..."

143 May 21. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Homosexuality, according to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is spiritually condemned...We must struggle against the evils in society by spiritual means, and medical and social ones as well."

144 May 21. On this date in 1998, an article stated "The Fayetteville Human Relations Commission...decided Wednesday not to endorse a Race Unity Day that is sponsored by the local Baha'i congregation...a body of the city government could not officially sanction a religious event."

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145 May 21. On this date in 2006, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "about the expulsion of scholar Sen McGlinn, from Leiden, in the Netherlands, and about the boycott of Kalimat Press on the part of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America."

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146 May 21. On this date in 2006, the UHJ wrote "The basic principle is that when a believer passes away, his principal residence, as well as items such as necessary furnishings and tools of trade, remains exempt when computing how much, if any, Ḥuqúqu'lláh remains to be paid on his estate."

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147 May 22. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote that a "true believer...must accept Bahá'u'lláh as a supreme and divine Manifestation and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the chief Interpreter and Exemplar of those teachings. He must accept each and all of the provisions of the Master's last Will and ..."

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148 May 22. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "after the world goes through its present travail, spiritual values will predominate, and those youth who have the benefit of both material and spiritual education will be the true leaders of society."

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149 May 22. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Taiwan to "base your translations on current editions of all the books referred to, if translation is involved. In each instance you should consult the original publisher and obtain a copy of the latest printing or edition to ensure that ..."

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150 May 22 or 23. On this date in 1844, the Báb declared to Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i his perceived fulfillment of Shaykhi expectations. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i accepted the Báb's claims and became the first Bábi.

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151 May 23. On this date in 1844, Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí Núrí (later named Bahá'u'lláh) and his first wife Ásíyih Khánum (later named Navváb or Ḥadrat-i-Varaqiyih-'Ulyá) had their first child, ''Abbás (later named 'Abdu'l-Bahá).

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152 May 23. On this date in 1943, Melba King converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Albuquerque, New Mexico, becoming the first full-blooded Eskimo to do so.

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153 May 23. On this date in 1985, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Norway, "the prescribed verse 'We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God'... Thus if a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í and this person for any reason refuses to utter this verse, then the Bahá'í cannot marry that person."

154 May 23. On this date in 1979, the Universal House of Justice sent a message to all National Spiritual Assemblies asking for "special prayers for the protection of the Faith and the believers in Iran."

155 May 23. On this date in 1955, the Bahá'í International Community submitted "Proposals to the United Nations for Charter Revision" to the U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, noting "The Bahá'í concept of world order...A world Super-State ...an International Executive ..."

156 May 23. On this date in 1991, the Research Department wrote a memorandum individual in response to questions on a number of topics, including the capitalization of pronouns in Bahá'í literature and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reference to "we Muslims".

157 Baha'i History - May 24, 1892, Mildred Eileen Clark was born in Manchester, Illinois. She would later be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands.

158 Baha'i History - May 24. On this date in 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

159 May 24. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the Free Religious Association at the Unitarian Conference in Boston, where he stated "The essential realities, which the Prophets labored so hard to establish in human hearts and minds while undergoing ordeals and suffering tortures ..."

160 May 24. On this date in 1920, Charles Greenleaf, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, died. He had served on the all-male Chicago House of Spirituality, which was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching. When today's Spiritual Assemblies become Houses of Justice, they will once more ....

161 Baha'i History - May 24, 2001, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "To the Believers Gathered for the Events Marking the Completion of the Projects on Mount Carmel" noting "the world is moving through a period of social paralysis, tyranny and anarchy..."

162 Baha'i History - May 24, 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote the European Teaching Committee that "every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who have left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."

163 May 24. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Undoubtedly, as the influence of God's Faith becomes more pervasive, the number of those who wish to obstruct its progress will also grow; new and increasingly formidable adversaries will come to the fore; and mischief-makers ..."

164 May 24. On this date in 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands, was born in Manchester, Illinois.

165 May 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the very progress of the Cause on the one hand, and the corresponding decline in ecclesiastical organizations on the other will inevitably incite Christian ecclesiastical leaders to vehemently oppose and undermine the Faith."

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166 May 25. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the North American Bahá'ís titled "The Anger of God and His Correction" wherein he states that the World Wars are God's "direct interposition...chastens the children of men for their refusal to acclaim the century-old Message..."

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167 May 25. On this date in 1975, the UHJ wrote all NSAs, "the purpose of teaching is to attract human beings to the divine Message and so imbue them with its spirit that they will dedicate themselves to its service, and this world will become another world and its people another people."

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168 May 25. On this date in 1999, the UHJ wrote all NSAs "the level of expenditure required from the Bahá'í International Fund is rising sharply" beyond "the need expressed in its 20 June 1995 letter to you for the contribution of ten million dollars each year ..." for the construction of the Arc.

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169 May 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies stating "Every institution of this divinely created Order is one more refuge for a distraught populace."

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170 May 26. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote "to continue the practice of abrogated observances of previous dispensations and thus undermine the independence of the Bahá'í Faith and create undesirable distinctions between themselves and their fellow-Bahá'ís...."

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171 Baha'i History - May 26, 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'í children like you have a lot of wonderful work to do for others in the future. But you don't even have to wait until you grow up, you can help your dear Mother teach the Cause to others right now, and also tell your playmates about it."

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172 May 26. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice wrote a "clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women."

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173 May 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi called on believers of the "North American continent, recognized stronghold of the administrative order of the Faith, and those residing in the British Commonwealth and Empire, situated in the heart, the East and West of the African continent ...."

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174 May 26. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi, Rúhíyyih Khánum and Leroy Ioas visit President Ben Zvi in Jerusalem, reciprocating his visit of April 26 to House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa.

175 May 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi announced the death of "Majdi'd-Dín, the most redoubtable adversary of `Abdu'l-Bahá, denounced by Him as the incarnation of Satan...who above sixty years labored with fiendish ingenuity and guile to undermine its foundations, miserably perished ...."

176 May 26. On this date in 1950, Singapore was opened to the Bahá'í Faith with the arrival of pioneer Khodadad Fozdar, who in 1953 was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Andaman Islands.

177 Baha'i History - May 27, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'ís...to devote more attention to...foreign students belonging to the black, yellow and brown races...confirm Bahá'ís who may go back to the distant place of the earth--the Pacific, Africa, Asia, etc.,...help to the newly-born Bahá'í Communities."

178 Baha'i History - May 27, 1928, Abu'l-Hasan-i-Ardikání (Hájí Amín) died in Tehran. An eminent follower of Bahá'u'lláh, he had served as the trustee of Huqúqu'lláh and was posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi and identified as one of the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh

179 May 27. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding questions about "reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas"

180 Baha'i History - May 27, 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote of "Dr. Esslemont...His past services, his selflessness and devotion, his book of unsurpassed excellence, his noble character and great industry entitle him to the highest esteem and warmest affection of every true Bahá'í..."

181 Baha'i History - May 27, 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote " the practice of nomination, so detrimental to the atmosphere of a silent and prayerful election, is viewed with mistrust...deny that God-given right of every elector to vote only in favour of those who he is conscientiously convinced..."

182 May 27. On this date in 1910, the "Journal of the Royal Society of Arts" published an article "Not less than one-fifth of the population of Persia is estimated to have embrace Bahaism..not a religion, but a religious movement. If it were a religion its chance of diffusion would probably be small...

183 May 27. On this date in 1850, Siyyid Yahyá Dárábí, later known as Vahíd, arrived in Nayríz and proclaimed the Báb's mission in a mosque, which resulted in the governor taking action against him. In the subsequent fighting, Vahíd and a group of Bábís were besieged at the nearby fort of Khájih.

184 May 27. On this date in 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark, named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands, died in Turku, Finland.

185 Baha'i History - May 27, 1966, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice" in response "to questions asked by an individual believer on the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice."

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186 May 28. On this date in 2002 the UHJ wrote a document titled "Reconciliation of Apparent Contradictions in the Bahá'í Writings" regarding Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl on Abraham and Zoroaster; 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a Baby Naming Ceremony; Minimum Age of Marriage; Corporal Punishment; Táhirih as a Woman Suffragette.

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187 May 28. On this date in 1978, the Universal House of Justice wrote "under normal circumstances it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

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188 May 28. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice wrote "With respect to your concerns about your own contact with Covenant-breakers...You will want to resist any temptation to be drawn into discussions or consideration of the arguments which they may advance."

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189 May 28. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice wrote "Regarding your concerns about Covenant-breakers participating in and posting material to the "Bahá'í Forum" on America Online (AOL)...You may warn the friends about interaction with Covenant-breakers...

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190 May 28. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram "to The Bahá'í World" wherein he first referred to the "Knights" of Bahá'u'lláh, calling for the "dispersal, immediate, determined, sustained and universal" of pioneers "throughout the unopened territories of the planet".

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191 May 28. On this date in 1984, the UHJ addressed a letter stating "From a Bahá'í point of view the belief that the Resurrection was the return to life of a body of flesh and blood, which later rose from the earth into the sky is not reasonable..."

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192 May 28. On this date in 1954, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "These 19 Day Feasts are for the Bahá'ís, and the Bahá'ís exclusively, and no variation from this principle is permitted."

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193 May 28. On this date in 1984, the UHJ wrote "In studying the Bible Bahá'ís must bear two principles in mind... The second is the fact that the text of the early Scriptures, such as the Bible, is not wholly authentic."

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194 May 28. On this date in 1960, the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land addressed a letter "repudiating the preposterous claim of Mr. Remey."

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195 May 29. On this date in 1892, Bahá'u'lláh died at the Mansion of Bahjí. By the time his great-grandson Shoghi Effendi died, everyone of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants

except for Shoghi Effendi had been declared Covenant-breakers by either Shoghi Effendi or 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

196 May 29. On this date in 1849, Arthur P. Dodge, later a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born. Dodge became a Bahá'í after attending lessons taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla.

197 May 29. On this date in 1921, Alessandro Bausani was born in Rome. He was a noted Italian Orientalist who converted to the Bahá'í Faith on April 8, 1950. The first Bahá'í marriage in Italy occurred when he married Elsa Scola Bausani on October 27, 1951.

198 May 29. On this date in 1907, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote Saichiro Fujita about Japan that "One will encounter a little difficulty in the beginning of the establishment of the Cause of God in that country, but later it will become very easy...."

199 May 29. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi referred to the publicity generated by remarks made earlier by Queen Marie of Romania as "this most astonishing and highly significant event in the progress of the Cause".

200 May 29. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Pioneers who volunteer for work, if they are not able to support themselves, should be supported by the National Fund until they either find work or their task is completed. Likewise, travelling teachers should be assisted financially ..."

201 May 29. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is surely a very unfortunate case when the parents and children differ on some grave issues of life such as marriage, but the best way is not to flout each other's opinion nor to discuss it in a charged atmosphere but rather try to settle...."

202 May 30. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding "a vasectomy, in general it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of avoiding having unwanted children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

203 May 30. On this date in 1997, the UHJ sent a letter to the NSAs, announcing the formation of Regional Bahá'í Councils, a level of the Bahá'í Administrative Order between the local and national level that may be elected or appointed at the Universal House of Justice's discretion.

204 May 30. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an NSA stating "To accept the Cause without the administration is like to accept the teachings without acknowledging the divine station of Bahá'u'lláh. To be a Bahá'í is to accept the Cause in its entirety. To take exception ..."

205 May 30. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi referred to "American believers, the vanguard and standard-bearers of the radiant army of Bahá'u'lláh."

206 May 30. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís a letter touching on a number of topics, including "the Administration is a system both living and dynamic, and that, through obedience to its principles and regulations, they will gain greater strength in teaching the Faith"

207 Baha'i History - May 31, 1988, The Universal House of Justice responded to a paper presented at a Baha'i Studies conference which raised the possibility that women could one day be eligible for membership on the Universal House of Justice.

208 May 31. On this date in 1907, Chester Ira Thacher died. He was an early American Bahá'í who served as Chairman of the Chicago House of Spirituality and was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

209 May 31. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Although teaching the Cause is the duty of every real Bahá'í and must be our main aim in life, to obtain the best results extensive and organized efforts at teaching must be by the approval and through the help and supervision of either the ..."

210 May 31. On this date in 1872, Thomas Breakwell, the first Englishman to become a Bahá’í and the first to make a Bahá’í pilgrimage, was born. Along with George Townsend and John Esslemont, Shoghi Effendi named him one of the "three luminaries of the Irish, English and Scottish Bahá'í communities."

211 May 31. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote a German Bahá'í he "the Bahá'í Administration has, as far as being grasped by the average Bahá'í goes, made far greater progress in the West, particularly America...What can be learned from our Oriental brethren is..."

Original Index: 1 | Current Position: 1

MAY 1. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, SHOGHI EFFENDI ADDRESSED A CABLEGRAM TO THE BAHÁ'Í ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, APPEALING TO THE ASSEMBLED GUESTS TO BEGIN THE SYSTEMATIC IMPLEMENTATION OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S VISION EXPRESSED IN THE "TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN."

submitted5 months agobyA35821363

May 1. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi addressed a cablegram to the Bahá'í Annual Convention of the United States and Canada, appealing to the assembled guests to begin the systematic implementation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision expressed in the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*.

The *Tablets of the Divine Plan* collectively refers to 14 letters (tablets) written between March 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada.

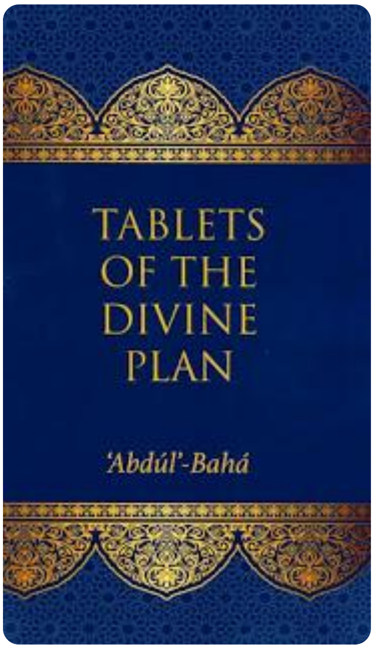
These collective letters, along with Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of Carmel* and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* were described by Shoghi Effendi as three of the "Charters" of the Bahá'í Faith.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S HISTORIC APPEAL

Message to 1936 Convention

Convey to American believers abiding gratitude efforts unitedly exerted in teaching field. Inaugurated campaigns should be vigorously pursued, systematically extended. Appeal to assembled delegates ponder historic appeal voiced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. Urge earnest deliberation with incoming National Assembly to insure its complete fulfilment. First Century of Bahá’í era drawing to a close. Humanity entering outer fringes most perilous stage its existence. Opportunities of present hour unimaginably precious. Would to God every State within American Republic and every Republic in American continent might ere termination of this glorious century embrace the light of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh and establish structural basis of His World Order.

Cablegram May 1, 1936


TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN
'Abdúl'-Bahá

Comments

MAY 1. ON THIS DATE IN 2001, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE TWO POWERS REFERRED TO BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN THE LAWH-I-MAQSÚD AS BEING PERSECUTORS OF THE JEWS WOULD APPEAR TO BE FRANCE AND RUSSIA." BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WROTE THE "TABLET OF MAQṢÚD" ON JANUARY 20, 1882.

submitted5 months agobyA35821363

May 1. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice wrote "it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia." Bahá'u'lláh wrote the *Tablet of Maqṣúd* on January 20, 1882.

Lawh-i-Maqsúd: Letter from the Universal House of Justice; excerpt from Juan Cole's Modernity and Millennium

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice From: Research Department

Date: 1 May 2001

Lawh-i-Maqsúd1

The Research Department has studied the questions about the Lawh-i-Maqsúd raised by Mr. ... in his email message of 7 February 2001 to the Universal House of Justice. Specifically, he enquires about the date of the revelation of the Tablet of Maqsúd and he seeks information about the "Two great powers"2 referred to in this Tablet. We provide the following response.

Date of Revelation of the Tablet

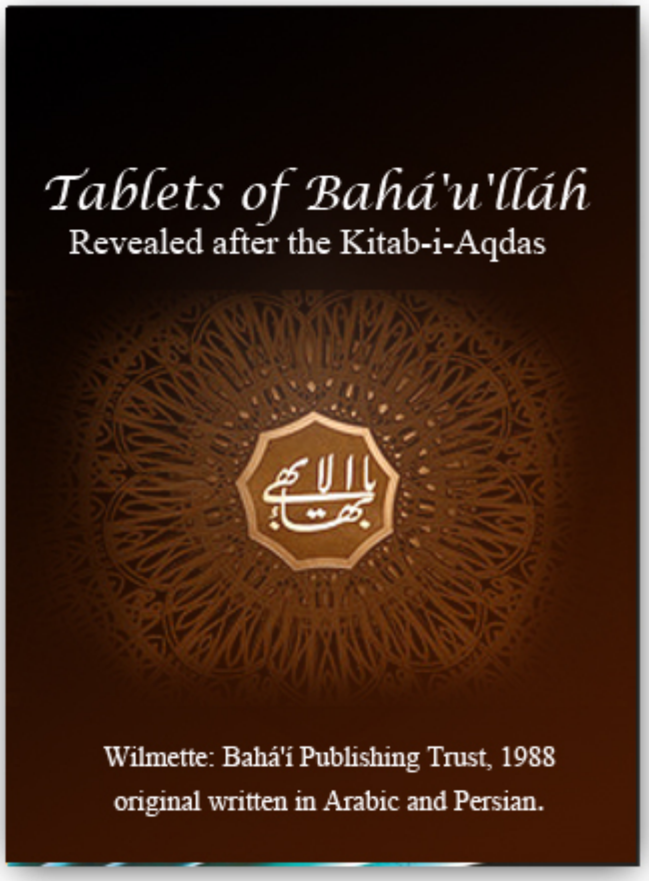
The Lawh-i-Maqsúd was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the prison-city of 'Akká on the 29th of Safar 1299 A.H. (January 20 1882).

"Two great powers"

Mr. ... requests information about the "Two great powers", mentioned in the following passage from the Tablet of Maqsúd, that appears on page 170 of Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Two great powers who regard themselves as the founders and leaders of civilization and the framers of constitutions have risen up against the followers of the Faith associated with Him who conversed with God.3 The Research Department has not, to date, been able to locate any references in the Bahá'í Writings that explain the identity of the two countries that arose against the followers of Moses. However, from a perusal of European history in the second part of the 19th century, it is suggested that the two powers referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the Lawh-i-Maqsúd as being persecutors of the Jews would appear to be France and Russia. The world powers of the 1880s were Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia. The Encyclopedia Judaica indicates that the Jews were officially emancipated in Germany during the latter half of the 19th century, and although there was some anti-semitic activity in Austria, it was officially opposed by the government. In France, however, between 1881 and 1894, there was a rise of anti-Jewish publicity and agitation, the founding of the National Anti-Semitic League in 1889, and the demand in 1891 by 32 French deputies (members of parliament) that Jews be expelled from France, culminated in the infamous Dreyfus Affair of 1894. In Russia, the assassination of Alexander II led to pogroms, leading to the so-called "May laws" of 1882 which prohibited Jews from living in villages and in 1886 to the limitation of the number of Jews allowed into University. Discrimination was continued officially until 1918. There was no official anti-semitism in Britain.

Notes: 1 Published in Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1997), pages 159-178. 2 Ibid., page 170. 3 Moses

Universal House of Justice



Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

Revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas

Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988

original written in Arabic and Persian.

Comments

Original Index: 1575 | Current Position: 3

MAY 1. ON THIS DATE IN 1961, KANICHI YAMAMOTO, THE FIRST JAPANESE BAHÁ’Í, DIED IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA.

May 1. On this date in 1961, Kanichi Yamamoto, the first Japanese Bahá’í, died in Berkeley, California.

Kanichi Yamamoto was born in 1879 in the Yamaguchi Prefecture of Japan. He moved to Hawaii in the early 1900s and in 1902 started working at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Smith in Honolulu. The Smiths' son, Clarence was already a Bahá’í and a Bahá’í woman by the name of Elizabeth Muther also lived at the Smith's home. As was required of new converts at the time, Kanichi Yamamoto wrote to 'Abdu’l-Bahá. 'Abdu’l-Bahá, in turn, addressed four Tablets to him.

In March, 1903, Yamamoto oved to Oakland, California, where for years he served in the home of Helen S. Goodall, a prominent and active Bahá’í. In 1908, a young woman by the name of Ima immigrated from Japan to Oakland, California for the express purpose of marrying Yamamoto. There is no record of Ima ever becoming a Bahá’í but the couple played a major role in taking care of guests at the Goodall's home which had become a hub of Bahá’í orientated activities in the Oakland area at that time.

On October 22, 1912, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived in San Francisco where he met Kanichi Yamamoto in person. While there, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also gave the three son's of Mr. Yamamoto Persian names: “To Hirose, the eldest, he gave the name of Hassan; to Hinju, Hossein, and to Masao, Farouk.”

During ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's stay in San Francisco, Mr. Yamamoto actually arranged a meeting for him at the Japanese Independent Church. The Yamamotos later decided to move to Berkeley, California where their children attended Bahá’í childrens classes. The childrens' teacher was Kathryn Frankland who also happened to teach the Bahá’í Faith to Saichiro Fujita, the second Japanese to accept the Bahá’í Faith.

The Yamamotos had six children, five boys and one girl named Fumiko. In 1919, while pregnant with Fumiko, Ima decided to visit her family in Japan and took their five boys with her. Fumiko was born in Japan. Shortly after the delivery, Ima died from influenza. Ima's sister, Tame, agreed to take care of all the six children until Kanichi Yamamoto arrived from the U.S. He and Tame decided that he would take the four oldest sons back to California and leave the two youngest ones with Tame. After Mr. Yamamoto arrived in the U.S., it proved difficult for him to attend to the four sons alone. News of this hardship eventually reached Tame who decided to immigrate to the U.S. and marry Kanichi Yamamoto.

During World War II, the Yamamotos were forced to relocate to an internment camp at the Gila River Indian Reservation where they had to work in the fields. Ironically, one son, Masao, served in the U.S. armed forces during that time and avoided internment. After the war, Kanichi and his family returned to Berkeley, where he lived until his death on May 1, 1961.

Comments

Original Index: 1576 | Current Position: 4

MAY 1. ON THIS DATE IN 1848, A LETTER FROM IRAN IN FRENCH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL DE CONSTANTINOPLE, MARKING ONE OF THE EARLIEST MENTIONS OF THE BAB IN A WESTERN LANGUAGE PUBLICATION. THIS OCCURRED BEFORE THE JUNE 1848 CONFERENCE OF BADASHT.

May 1. On this date in 1848, a letter from Iran in French was published in the *Journal de Constantinople*, marking one of the earliest mentions of the Bab in a Western language publication. This occurred before the June 1848 Conference of Badasht.

It says:

D'après notre correspondance de Perse, datée de Teheran, 1er mai, que nous publions plus bas, …

De plus, il paraîtrait que les faits auxquels ces nouvelles se rapportent, auraient eu pour résultat d'encourager les partisans de Bab dans leur résistance á l'autorité religieuse du pays. Bab est un fou qui s'est annoncé en Perse, il y a quelque temps, comme le Mehdj (Messie), et par ses prédications dans l'Azerbaïdjan et le Ghilan, il avait réussi á grouper autour de lui environ 30,000 prosélytes. Le prince royal nommé en dernier lieu gouverneur de Tébriz, ayant pu, par la persuasion, obtenir (p. 2) que Bab confessàt son imposture, celui-ci a été jeté dans un cachot, apres avoir été soumis prèalablement à la torture, conformément aux lois du pays.

Il serait possible que ces mouvemens eussent des rapports avec les projets révolutionnaires de Sàlar…

Bien que les nouvelles que nous venons de donner sur la situation de la Perse, soieat puisées à des sources dignes de foi, nous pensons qu'avant d'y ajouter une complète créance, il serait convenable d'en attendre la confirmation par les lettres que le prochain courrier nous apportera de ce pays.…

with thanks to J. and Liam Winters at BLO, translates to :

According to our correspondence from Persia, dated May 1st from Teheran, which we publish below, …

In addition, it would appear that the facts to which this news relates has had the effect of encouraging the supporters of the Bab in their resistance to religious authorities of the country. The Bab is a madman who has announced himself in Persia, some time ago, to be the Mahdi (Messiah), and by his preaching in Azerbaijan and Gilan, he has succeeded in gathering around him about 30,000 converts. The royal prince named last governor of Tabríz, having been able, by persuasion, to get (p. 2) the Bab to confess his imposture. The latter has been thrown into a dungeon, after having previously been subjected to torture, in accordance with the laws of the country.

It is possible that these movements had relationships with revolutionary projects of Salar ...

Although the news that we have just given concerning the situation of Persia has been drawn from reliable sources, we believe that, before giving it complete credence, it would be proper to wait for confirmation from letters which the next post will bring us from that country.

JOURNAL DE CONSTANTINOPLE

ECHO DE L'ORIENT.

Comments

Original Index: 1577 | Current Position: 5

MAY 1. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, THE HOUSE OF WORSHIP IN WILMETTE, ILLINOIS, WAS CONSECRATED IN A SIMPLE CEREMONY FOR BAHÁ'ÍS ONLY. FOR DETAILS, PLEASE READ THE ARTICLE TITLED "JUBILEE AT WILMETTE" BY MARZIEH GAIL, ON PAGE 152 OF THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD, VOLUME 12.

May 1. On this date in 1953, the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, was consecrated in a simple ceremony for Bahá'ís only. For details, please read the article titled "Jubilee at Wilmette" by Marzieh Gail, on page 152 of *The Bahá'í World*, Volume 12.

Comments

Original Index: 1578 | Current Position: 6

MAY 1. ON THIS DATE IN 1951, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "ALTHOUGH IT IS GOOD NOT TO PROVOKE CONVENTIONAL PEOPLE TOO MUCH, ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MUST NOT ALLOW THEM TO COME BETWEEN US AND OBEYING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH; AND WE KNOW THAT HE HAS INSTRUCTED HIS SERVANTS TO SPREAD HIS MESSAGE.... "

May 1. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Although it is good not to provoke conventional people too much, on the other hand, we must not allow them to come between us and obeying Bahá'u'lláh; and we know that He has instructed His servants to spread His Message.... "

1979. Although it is good not to provoke conventional people too much, on the other hand, we must not allow them to come between us and obeying Bahá'u'lláh; and we know that He has instructed His servants to spread His Message....

(From a letter dated 1 May 1951 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

Original Index: 1569 | Current Position: 7

MAY 2. ON THIS DATE IN 1943, NARAYENRAO RANGNATH SHETHJI, THE FIRST KNOWN HINDU CONVERT TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH, DIED.

May 2. On this date in 1943, Narayenrao Rangnath Shethji, the first known Hindu convert to the Bahá'í Faith, died.

Narayenrao Rangnath Shethji, better known as Vakil, was born in a well-known Hindu family in Navsari. He learnt about the Bahá'í Faith from Mirzá Mahram. He became a Bahá'í in 1909.

He graduated from Bombay University in 1911 with a degree in Law. He was an advocate of the Bombay High Court and one of the senior lawyers of Surat.

He went on a Bahá'í pilgrimage where he met 'Abdu'l-Bahá who said to Vakil "you will be eternally confirmed." He was elected chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma in 1923.

He died on May 2, 1943.

Comments

Original Index: 1570 | Current Position: 8

MAY 2. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, THE BAHÁ'Í HOUSE OF WORSHIP IN WILMETTE WAS DEDICATED.

May 2. On this date in 1953, the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette was dedicated.

'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Wilmette in 1912 for the ground-breaking ceremony during which he laid the cornerstone.

The actual construction of the building did not begin until 1921, after Bahá'ís agreed to use a design by Louis Bourgeois.

On January 16, 1931, the dome of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, which was nearing completion, caught fire. Wilmette and Evanston firefighters worked to save the structure, and damage was estimated at $50,000.

The temple was eventually dedicated on May 2, 1953.

Comments

MAY 2. ON THIS DATE IN 1937, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "THE ENEMIES IN PALESTINE ARE THE MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, MOHAMMED ALI'S PARTY... THIS OPPOSITION WILL GRADUALLY INCREASE AND SPREAD TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND AFTERWARDS WILL AFFECT THE CATHOLIC RELIGION AND WILL BRING THE DOWNFALL OF THE POPE."

May 2. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "The enemies in Palestine are the Muslims, Christians, Mohammed Ali's party. It is only the beginning of the opposition of the church. This opposition will gradually increase and spread to the Church of England and afterwards will affect the Catholic religion and will bring the downfall of the Pope. The religious opposition is shifting to the West beginning with the politicians. The West starting with the religious leaders there is an increasing opposition of the church and later on it will affect the State. Be confident that whatever happens will eventually be for the good of the Cause. The Bahá'ís must ask to be given administrative positions, that is, secondary posts and prove their ability to administration. They must be well informed and read the books of the enemies as well as Bahá'í books and be prepared to refute arguments. The challenge will be intellectual. What the Cause requires is perseverance."

Comments

chromedome919: Link has error. Unable to read reference attached.

MAY 2. ON THIS DATE IN 1863, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ANNOUNCED TO HIS CLOSE COMPANIONS IN THE NAJIBIYYIH GARDENS HIS MISSION, MARKING THE START OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AS DISTINCT FROM BÁBISM. THE TWELVE DAYS BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SPENT IN THE NAJIBIYYIH GARDENS IS COMMEMORATED ANNUALLY BY BAHÁ'ÍS AS THE FESTIVAL OF RIḌVÁN

May 2. On this date in 1863, Bahá'u'lláh announced to his close companions in the Najibiyyih gardens his mission, marking the start of the Bahá'í Faith as distinct from Bábism. The twelve days Bahá'u'lláh spent in the Najibiyyih gardens is commemorated annually by Bahá'ís as the festival of Riḍván. Shoghi Effendi fixed the first day of Ridván as the day of the election of every Local Spiritual Assembly, and in normal circumstances every National Spiritual Assembly is elected within the twelve-day period. Further, the Universal House of Justice issues an annual Ridván Message, written in English, conveying items of encouragement and issues of importance to the Bahá'í world, related to the progress of the various Plans.

For example, the Ridván Message of 2016 stated...

The Universal House of Justice

Riḍván 2016

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

With the advent of the King of Festivals, the period of preparation for the next global Plan is over: we now summon the friends of God to a new five-year commitment of courage, resolve, and resources.

The company of Bahá'u'lláh's faithful stands poised. Institutional gatherings convened across the world in recent months have sent out successive signals of eagerness to begin this mighty enterprise. The imperatives contained in the message addressed to the Counsellors' Conference are already being translated into decisive plans of action. Decades of heroic endeavour have shaped the community and earned it a measure of proven ability in fostering growth, steeling it for this moment. The last two decades, in particular, have markedly accelerated this longed-for rise in proficiency.

During this period, the adoption of an evolving framework for action has enabled the friends to progressively nurture and refine essential capacities, giving rise to simple acts of service at first, leading to more elaborate patterns of action, which in turn demanded the development of capacities still more complex. In this way, a systematic process of human resource development and community building has been started in thousands of clusters—and, in many of them, become far advanced. The focus has not been solely on the individual believer, or the community, or the institutions of the Faith; all three inseparable participants in the evolution of the new World Order are being stimulated by the spiritual forces released through the unfoldment of the Divine Plan. The signs of their progress are more and more apparent: in the confidence that countless believers have acquired to share accounts of Bahá'u'lláh's life and discuss the implications of His Revelation and peerless Covenant; in the growing contingents of souls who, as a result, have been attracted to His Cause and are contributing to the achievement of His unifying vision; in the ability of Bahá'ís and their friends, at the very grassroots of the community, to describe in eloquent terms their experience of a process capable of transforming character and shaping social existence; in the significantly larger numbers of those indigenous to a country who, as members of Bahá'í institutions and agencies, are now guiding the affairs of their communities; in the reliable, generous, and sacrificial giving to the Fund, so vital for sustaining the advancement of the Faith; in the unprecedented efflorescence of individual initiative and collective action in support of community-building activities; in the enthusiasm of so many selfless souls in the prime of youth who are bringing immense vigour to this work, notably by tending to the spiritual education of younger generations; in the enhancement of the devotional character of the community through regular gatherings for worship; in the rise in capacity at all levels of Bahá'í administration; in the readiness of institutions, agencies, and individuals to think in terms of process, to read their immediate reality and assess their resources in the places where they live, and to make plans on that basis; in the now familiar dynamic of study, consultation, action, and reflection that has cultivated an instinctive posture of learning; in the mounting appreciation for what it means to give effect to the Teachings through social action; in the multiplying opportunities being sought and seized to offer a Bahá'í perspective on discourses prevalent in society; in the awareness of a global community that, in all its endeavours, it is hastening the emergence of divine civilization by manifesting the society-building power inherent in the Cause; indeed, in the friends' growing consciousness that their efforts to foster inner transformation, to widen the circle of unity, to collaborate with others in the field of service, to help populations take charge of their own spiritual, social, and economic development—and, through all such efforts, to bring about the betterment of the world—express the very purpose of religion itself.

While no single measure can capture the totality of the Bahá'í community's progress, much can be inferred from the number of clusters worldwide where a programme of growth has been established, which, with gratitude for the bounties bestowed by the Abhá Beauty, we confirm has surpassed 5,000. So broad a foundation as this was a prerequisite for taking on the task that now confronts the Bahá'í world—strengthening the process of growth in every cluster where it has begun and extending further an enriching pattern of community life. The sustained effort required will be arduous. But the outcome has the potential to be profoundly significant, even epoch making. Small steps, if they are regular and rapid, add up to a great distance travelled. By concentrating on the advance that must be made in a cluster in an initial period—for instance, in the six cycles occurring before the first of the bicentennial anniversaries—the friends will do much to bring their goal for the full five years within reach. In each cycle are vested fleeting opportunities for a stride forward, precious possibilities that will not return.

In society at large, alas, the symptoms of an ever-deepening malaise of the soul multiply and worsen. How striking that, as the peoples of the world suffer for want of the true remedy and turn fitfully from one false hope to another, you are collectedly refining an instrument that connects hearts with the Word of God eternal. How striking that, amid the cacophony of fixed opinions and opposing interests that grows everywhere more fierce, you are focused on drawing people together to build communities that are havens of unity. Far from disheartening you, let the world's prejudices and hostilities be reminders of how urgently souls all around you need the healing balm that you alone can present to them.

This is the last in a series of consecutive Five Year Plans. At its close, a new phase in the evolution of the Divine Plan will open, set to propel the community of Bahá'u'lláh towards the third century of the Bahá'í Era. May the friends of God in every country appreciate the promise of these few years ahead, which will be rigorous preparation for the even mightier tasks yet to come. The present Plan's broad scope enables every individual to support this work, however humble one's share. We ask you, cherished co-workers, adorers of Him Who is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, to spare no effort in applying all you have learned and every God-given ability and skill you possess to advance the Divine Plan into its next essential stage. To your own ardent supplications for heavenly assistance we add ours, offered in the Holy Shrines, on behalf of all who labour for this all-encompassing Cause.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" , the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.

Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.

Comments

MAY 2. ON THIS DATE IN 1916, LUA GETSINGER DIED UNEXPECTEDLY AT THE AGE OF FORTY-THREE OF HEART FAILURE WHILE IN EGYPT. A PROMINENT DISCIPLE OF `ABDU'L-BAHÁ, HE ALSO TITLED HER "HERALD OF THE COVENANT" AND "MOTHER TEACHER OF THE WEST."

May 2. On this date in 1916, Lua Getsinger died unexpectedly at the age of forty-three of heart failure while in Egypt.

A prominent Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, he also titled her "Herald of the Covenant" and "Mother Teacher of the West."

Lua Getsinger became a Bahá'í in 1897.

In 1898, Lua Getsinger undertook a Bahá'í pilgrimage to Palestine to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá with other American pilgrims, including Ibrahim George Kheiralla, Phoebe Hearst, and May Boles.

It was during this trip, in Akka, that Kheiralla witnessed firsthand the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his brothers, leading him, upon his return to America in 1899, to form the "Society of Behaists" which would later be led by Shua Ullah Behai and to author a book, *Beha'u'llah*, wherein he states his belief that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh.
Ultimately, in the conflict between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, Kheiralla sided with the latter for which he was declared a Covenant-breaker.

Phoebe Hearst was an early Bahá'í, a wealthy philanthropist, the wife of Senator George Hearst, and the mother of publisher William Randolph Hearst. She later became estranged from the Bahá'í Faith due to being extorted for money by other Bahá'ís.

May Boles would wed William Sutherland Maxwell on May 8, 1902, in London. They met while William was studying architecture in Paris and May was the sister of one of his classmates. The couple were the parents of Mary Sutherland Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi, who was born to them on August 8, 1910. They also hosted 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their Montreal on September 2, 1912.

On June 19, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in New York about Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet of the Branch* , declaring himself the "Centre of the Covenant," New York the "City of the Covenant," and Lua Getsinger the "Herald of the Covenant."

Comments

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1967, ELIZABETH HOPPER, A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR PIONEERING TO THE MADEIRA ISLANDS, DIED.

May 3. On this date in 1967, Elizabeth Hopper, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Madeira Islands, died.

Elizabeth Hopper was born in Hume, Allegheny County, New York. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree at Cornell University, and entered the field of library science, serving for some time as senior librarian for an international agency for the United States.

Her interest in education and new ideas led her to the Bahá'í Faith. She was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C. for more then twenty years, serving it as secretary and on local and national Bahá'í committees involved with teaching and publication.

Elizabeth Hopper retired in 1952, and in 1953 she offered to go as a pioneer settler to the virgin area of the Madeira Islands. Joining her in this pioneer venture was another younger Bahá'í, Miss Ada Schott, who also volunteered to go so that Madeira would have a pioneer team to teach the Faith and establish a new community.

On September 20, 1953, Elizabeth and Ada landed in Funchal, Madeira's chief port and city, and cabled the news of their arrival. Their names were added to the World Crusade map.

By 1956 after three years of ardent prayer, patiently cultivated contacts and innumerable firesides, they were at last able to report the declaration of three new Bahá'ís in Funchal. The joy of this hard-won achievement brought new problems. They were required to leave the island temporarily before their permanent residence visas could be obtained. Then personal circumstances made it necessary for Miss Schott to return to the United States. This meant that Elizabeth was alone. She was seventy-six years of age at that time, feeling the inevitable handicaps of age, subject to bouts of discouragement, and yet impelled to continue the work of deepening, strengthening and teaching new believers and contacts. She appealed for help from additional settlers and through visitors from the accessible Bahá'í communities. There was an encouraging trickle of visitors who came and stayed for a time and added much happiness and help through their presence: Mrs. Sara Kenny and her mother, Mrs. Ella Dunffield, Mrs. Peggy True, Miss Trudy Eisenberg, Miss

Katherine Meyer, Miss Elise Austin, Mr. and Mrs. Valine from the Canaries, Mrs. Elizabeth Stamp, Mr. Missaghieh, and others. But to her great dismay no permanent settler could be found to come and stay.

During the period from 1956 to 1961 when Elizabeth was the only resident pioneer, her letters and reports to the Untied States Africa Committee unfold a moving account of the problems and situations which many pioneers must face. There was also the constant strain of communication in a language which she could not master. There were subtle barriers with which cultural differences can impair understanding and confidence. Elizabeth grieved deeply over the "spiritual drop-outs" she encountered when she had worked so hard to give a redeeming message. She also had to deal with the conflicts and confusion which can result from situations where actions and attitudes of the believers fail to uphold the moral standards and spiritual responsibilities of the Bahá'í Faith.

Only once, during this lonely period, did Elizabeth look back in anguish. In a letter to a dear friend she wrote of her loneliness and despair and wondered whether another place might have yielded better results. But in the same letter her strength of spirit was expressed for she corrected herself, writing, "...and then I have to remember that Madeira is in the Divine Plan and the Guardian wanted an Assembly there."

In this period of tests two of her most wonderful Bahá'í experiences occurred. She attended the Most Great Jubilee in London and also received permission to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. How happy these two confirming experiences made her and how much she learned from seeing the devotion of the friends who serve at the World Centre.

In 1961 a new Bahá'í pioneer arrived to spend six months. Elizabeth warmly welcome and praised Mr. Joseph Kubik who came and helped with the Bahá'í community responsibilities. Then came a new Bahá'í family from the Canaries. There was great happiness and activity for several months, and then again Elizabeth was alone.

In 1963, at the age of eighty, Elizabeth, still alone and with her hearing growing steadily worse, she was urged by friends to return to the United States. She had the courage to reply, "No, dears, I do not want to come back regardless of how difficult things are becoming."

In 1964, Mrs. Isabel Horton, who stayed with her until her end, arrived in Madeira, giving her the assurance she needed that her lifelong accumulation of Bahá'í literature and archives materials would be safely preserved.

Elizabeth Hopper died on May 3, 1967.

The Universal House of Justice in recognition of her self-sacrifice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on May 5, 1967:

PLEASE ASSURE FRIENDS PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ELIZABETH HOPPER KNIGHT OF BAHAULLAH OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE DEVOTION STEADFASTNESS

Comments

Original Index: 1561 | Current Position: 13

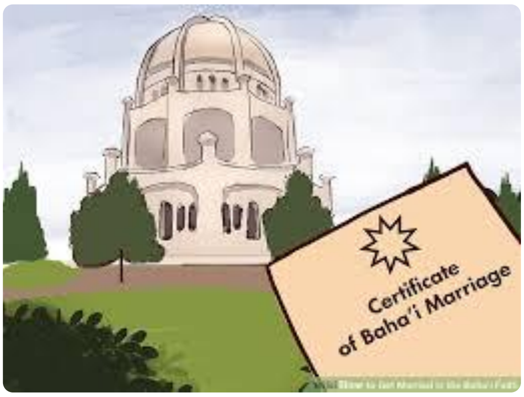
MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "OF COURSE, UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, EVERY PERSON SHOULD CONSIDER IT HIS MORAL DUTY TO MARRY. AND THIS IS WHAT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH HAS ENCOURAGED THE BELIEVERS TO DO. BUT MARRIAGE IS BY NO MEANS AN OBLIGATION."

May 3. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy."

1267. Moral Duty to Marry But Marriage is Not an Obligation

"...Of course, under normal circumstances, every person should consider it his moral duty to marry. And this is what Bahá'u'lláh has encouraged the believers to do. But marriage is by no means an obligation. In the last resort it is for the individual to decide whether he wishes to lead a family life or live in a state of celibacy."

(From a letter of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 3, 1936; cited by the Universal House of Justice in a letter to an individual believer, February 6, 1973: Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973, pp. 109-110)

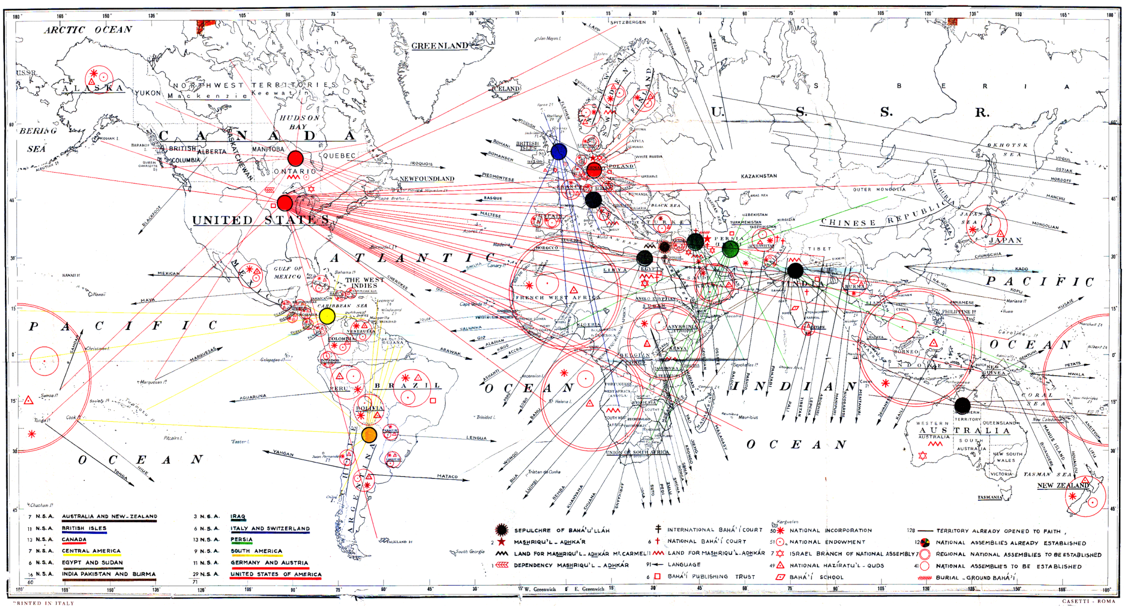


Comments

Original Index: 1562 | Current Position: 14

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, SHOGHI EFFENDI LAUNCHED THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE, WHOSE END WAS TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S DECLARATION OF HIS POSITION TO HIS CLOSE COMPANIONS IN THE NAJIBIYYIH GARDEN. SHOGHI EFFENDI DIED BEFORE SEEING THE END OF THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE.

May 3. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi launched the Ten Year Crusade, whose end was timed to coincide with 100th anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of his position to his close companions in the Najibiyyih garden. Shoghi Effendi died before seeing the end of the Ten Year Crusade, which marked the end of the Second Epoch of the Formative Age of the Divine Plan. This corresponds to the First Epoch as defined in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Tablets of the Divine Plan*.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Comments

Original Index: 1563 | Current Position: 15

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1980, HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD JOHN ROBARTS STATED "THE ONLY HOPE, THE ONLY LIGHT IN THE WORLD IS THE LIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH...THE PIONEERS HAVE BEEN TELLING US FOR YEARS...WE HAVE IT, AND THE ONLY WAY THAT THEY'RE GOING TO GET IT IS FOR US TO GO AND GIVE IT TO THEM..."

May 3. On this date in 1980, Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts addressed the Canadian Bahá'í National Convention, stating "..the only hope, the only light in the world is the light of Bahá'u'lláh...the pioneers have been telling us for years that masses are waiting to receive the news of the love of God and the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. We have it, and the only way that they're going to get it is for us to go and give it to them ...."

221. "..the only hope, the only light in the world is the light of Bahá'u'lláh...the pioneers have been telling us for years that masses are waiting to receive the news of the love of God and the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. We have it, and the only way that they're going to get it is for us to go and give it to them ...."

— Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts, from an address at the Bahá'í National Convention, Vancouver, Canada, May 3, 1980

Comments

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1947, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO TRANSLATE THE TEACHINGS INTO GERMAN FROM PERSIAN AND ARABIC. NO PERSIAN WITH A SUFFICIENT EXPERT KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN IS AVAILABLE TO HELP IN THIS MATTER...THESE YOU CAN BETTER TRANSLATE FROM GOOD ENGLISH EDITIONS."

May 3. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote Adelbert Muhlschlegel "now is not the time to translate the teachings into German from Persian and Arabic. No Persian with a sufficient expert knowledge of German is available to help in this matter...These you can better translate from good English editions."

3 May 1947 [to Dr. Adelbert Muhlschlegel]

Your letters to our beloved Guardian, dated Feb. 7th and 11th, as well as the manuscript of "Hidden Words" have been received, and he has instructed me to answer them on his behalf.

He is very happy to have this opportunity of communicating with you personally, and assuring you of how much he appreciates your devoted services in the path of our glorious Faith.

Regarding the questions you have asked him:

There is no correspondence or connection between the Hidden Word (Arabic) no. 1 and the last Arabic Hidden Word, or between these and any passage of the Seven Valleys.

The Cairo edition of the Hidden Words, approved by the Master, is the one you must refer to for accuracy, and disregard all other texts. This answers the questions connected with Hidden Words number 18 and 39 and 1 (two) and 35 (two).

Hidden Word no. 70: this is not addressed to any person but is a mystical expression and an allusion to the Manifestation of God.

No marginal notes should be added except any of `Abdu'l-Bahá Himself or the notes of the Cairo edition.

The whole question of translation from the original text is very important. He has just written on this subject, at some length, to Baroness von Werthern, explaining to her that he considers **now is not the time to translate the teachings into German from Persian and Arabic. No Persian with a sufficient expert knowledge of German is available to help in this matter;** he does not feel, therefore, that such works as "Some Answered Questions", "Seven Valleys", etc. should be embarked upon at all. People who have not spent years steeped in the atmosphere and language and literature of the East cannot possibly grasp the subtleties of oriental usage. A good example of this very point is that Prof. Sussheim has not grasped what Bahá'u'lláh means by the word "[Arabic script]". He is using it in a loose and colloquial sense which means "a passing thing", a small amount, and not literally associating it with food.

He feels you should continue your study of the teachings in the original and, from time to time, if you desire to, translate material from the original in short excerpts; but not at present important books and Tablets. **These you can better translate from good English editions.**

There is so much teaching work, and administrative work, to be done in Germany at present that he urges you to concentrate on this form of service. The public need to receive the Message on a large scale, to have available literature at once, to read articles on the Bahá'í Faith; and in all these ways your services can be of great help.

P.S. "Tur" and "Sinai" should not be taken literally; the first is an allusion to Mt. Sinai, which in this case means the Manifestation of God; the second, "Sinai", represents the human heart.

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

May the Almighty bless, sustain and guide you, at all times and under all conditions, assist you to proclaim the verities of His Faith, and lend a tremendous impetus to the advancement and consolidation of its new-born and God-given institutions,

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

Comments

Original Index: 1565 | Current Position: 17

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1956, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE JOHANNA VON WERTHERN "WITH YOUR ENTHUSIASM AND THAT OF THE OTHER DEAR FRIENDS, IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE A FLOURISHING BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY EXISTS" IN INNSBRUCK AND "THAT THE PRESTIGE OF OUR BELOVED FAITH IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH" THE TEMPLE IN GERMAN

May 3. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote Johanna von Werthern "with your enthusiasm and that of the other dear friends, it will not be long before a flourishing Bahá'í Community exists" in Innsbruck and "that the prestige of our beloved Faith is directly involved with" the Temple in Germany.

3 May 1956 [to Mrs Johanna von Werthern]

He is glad to see that the work is progressing well in Innsbruck; and feels sure that, with your enthusiasm and that of the other dear friends, it will not be long before a flourishing Bahá'í Community exists there....

As you no doubt know, he has not been satisfied with the Temple drawings received from Germany, and is now in touch with the National Assembly regarding possible modifications of some recently sent him.

He considers that the prestige of our beloved Faith is directly involved with this building; and that what may to an architect, fond of an advanced style, seem appropriate, would not be sufficiently dignified to represent our Faith as the first Temple on the European continent. The problem will no doubt soon be solved. It merely requires patience and more effort.

Comments

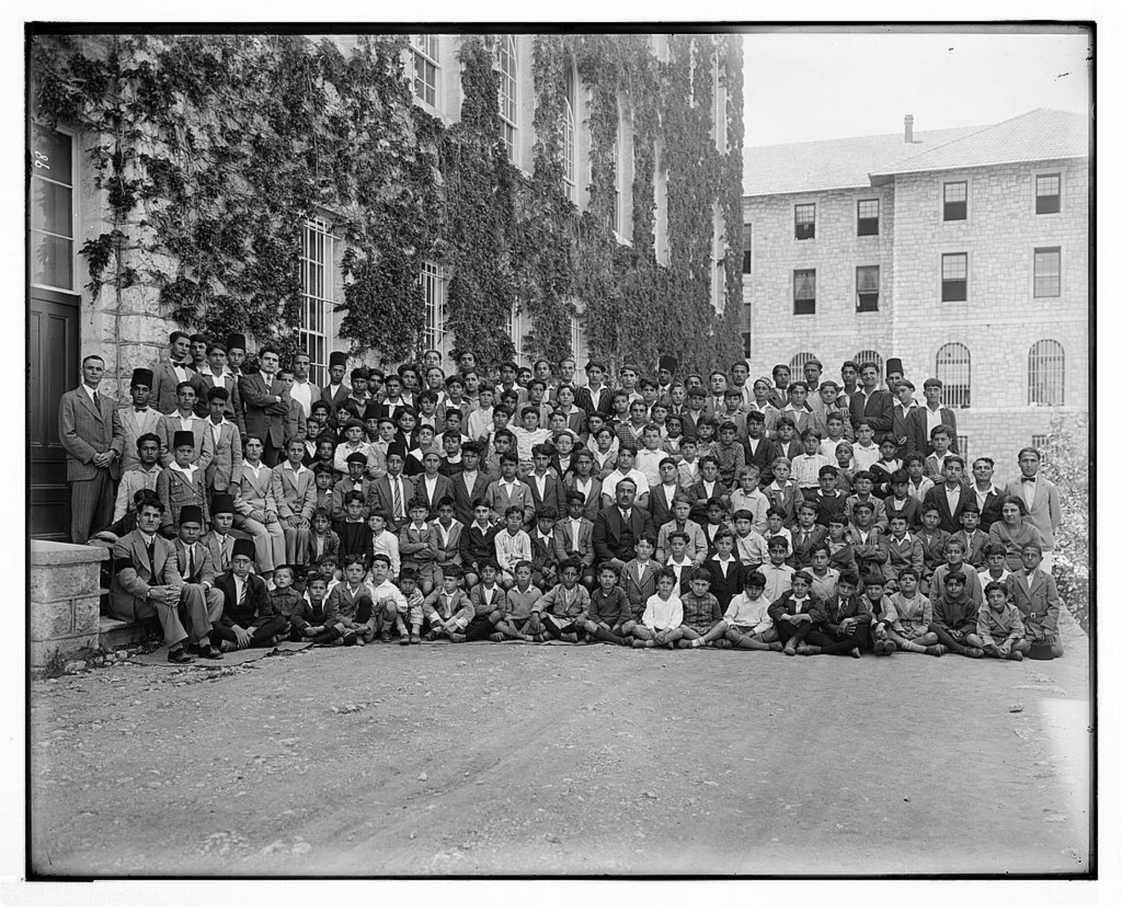
Original Index: 1566 | Current Position: 18

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1914, SHOGHI EFFENDI, A STUDENT IN BEIRUT, WROTE "GOING BACK TO OUR COLLEGE ACTIVITIES OUR BAHÁ'Í MEETINGS, WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU ABOUT, ARE REORGANIZED AND ONLY TODAY WE ARE SENDING LETTERS, ENCLOSING GLAD TIDINGS OF THE HOLY LAND, TO THE BAHÁ'Í ASSEMBLIES IN ..."

May 3. On this date in 1914, Shoghi Effendi, a student in Beirut, wrote "Going back to our college activities our Bahá'í meetings, which I have spoken to you about, are reorganized and only today we are sending letters, enclosing glad tidings of the Holy Land, to the Bahá'í Assemblies in various countries." He studied at Syrian Protestant College, as did his cousins Munib Shahid, Soheil Afnan, and others, who he declared Covenant-breakers.

From Chapter 1 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, titled "Childhood and Youth"...

Shoghi Effendi also played a dominant role in the activities of the Bahá'í students studying in Beirut, through which passed so many of the pilgrims from Persia and the Far East on their way to and from Haifa. He writes, in a letter from Beirut dated May 3, 1914: "Going back to our college activities our Bahá'í meetings, which I have spoken to you about, are reorganized and only today we are sending letters, enclosing glad tidings of the Holy Land, to the Bahá'í Assemblies in various countries."



Comments

Original Index: 1567 | Current Position: 19

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1932, WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI STATED "... ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING THE CAUSE AND INTERESTING DISTINGUISHED PERSONS ALWAYS BRING HIM MUCH JOY AND PLEASURE...ONE DAY THE CAUSE WILL PASS THE THRESHOLD OF THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS AND THEY WILL BECOME COMPLETELY CONVERTED."

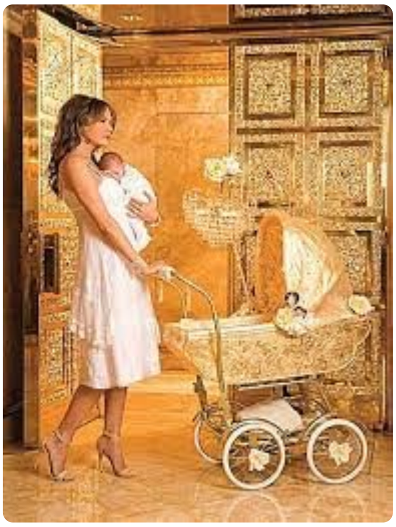
May 3. On this date in 1932, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "Your letters with the wonderful reports of your activities in teaching the Cause and interesting distinguished persons always bring him much joy and pleasure...They will be bound, once they read something or lend an attentive ear, to unconsciously modify their views, for the Message will be gradually working in their subconscious mind and thereby moulding their views and interests. One day the Cause will pass the threshold of their consciousness and they will become completely converted."

1969. Importance of Reaching Distinguished Persons with the Teachings

"Your letters with the wonderful reports of your activities in teaching the Cause and interesting distinguished persons always bring him much joy and pleasure. He wished he had a large number of your type, so devoted to the Faith and so determined to spread its message throughout the world.

"Even though the men you contact do not immediately embrace the Cause and whole-heartedly support it, yet the Word of God that has penetrated their mind and heart will not remain idle. **They will be bound, once they read something or lend an attentive ear, to unconsciously modify their views, for the Message will be gradually working in their subconscious mind and thereby moulding their views and interests. One day the Cause will pass the threshold of their consciousness and they will become completely converted.** But even before that day, they will be expressing that spirit in their deliberations and thereby helping the progress of the cause of peace throughout the world."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 3, 1932)



Comments

Original Index: 1568 | Current Position: 20

MAY 3. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, LEROY IOAS WROTE THAT "THE GUARDIAN HAS BEEN GREATLY PLEASED WITH THE MANNER IN WHICH THE FAITH HAS BEEN SPREADING IN JAPAN...THE FUTURE OF THE FAITH IN JAPAN IS VERY GREAT...IT WILL BRING THE LIGHT OF GUIDANCE TO ALL PARTS OF JAPAN IN A VERY SHORT TIME."

May 3. On this date in 1954, Leroy Ioas wrote that "The Guardian has been greatly pleased with the manner in which the Faith has been spreading in Japan...The future of the Faith in Japan is very great...it will bring the light of guidance to all parts of Japan in a very short time."

The Guardian has been greatly pleased with the manner in which the Faith has been spreading in Japan. He sincerely hopes that during the second year of the Crusade it will spread even more rapidly, and to more centers.

The future of the Faith in Japan is very great. It now depends upon the Bahá'ís to teach, to develop the Faith in a city and then move on to a new area. If this is continued diligently, it will bring the light of guidance to all parts of Japan in a very short time.

(signed by Leroy Ioas)

(May 3, 1954)

Comments

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1946, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "...THE 1335 DAYS IS FIGURED ACCORDING TO THE SOLAR CALENDAR, BUT IN ADJUSTING THE 1335 DAYS, ONE MUST TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE TIME AT WHICH THE PROPHECIES WERE GIVEN AND CHANGE THEM INTO SOLAR TIME, WHICH WOULD BRING THE DATE TO 1963."

submitted5 months agobyA35821363

May 4. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963."

1414. Predictions of Peace, Prophecy of Daniel--1335 Days

"Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask, namely, 'Blessed is he who cometh unto the thousand three hundred and thirty five days'. These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: From a Tablet to a Kurdish friend: The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 31, Shoghi Effendi and Lady Blomfield)

"...The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963.

"There is one thing of importance for the Bahá'ís to understand; and that is, that this prophecy refers to happenings within the Faith, not occurrences outside the Faith. It refers specifically to the spread of the Faith over the face of the earth. This will be accomplished when the Bahá'í Faith is firmly established in all the virgin areas outlined in the Ten-Year Crusade, and the other goals of the Crusade are completed. Thus it behooves us to work day and night in order to accomplish this glorious goal."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 4, 1946: Some Extracts from Letters written on behalf of the Guardian on the subject of the Prophecy of Daniel: A Compilation from the World Centre to the compiler)

On May 11, 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of religious prophecy of over 3,000 years!"

148 PIONEERING

"...Sometimes people strive all their lives to render outstanding service. Here is the time and opportunity to render historic services; in fact the most unique in history, aiding in the fulfillment of Daniel's Prophecies of the Last Day, and the 1335 days, when men are to be blessed by the Glory of the Lord, covering the entire globe--which is the real goal of the Ten Year Crusade.

"In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of religious prophecy of over 3,000 years!"

"The pioneers themselves must realize that not only are they fulfilling the wishes of Bahá'u'lláh, and doing that which the Master Himself said He longed to do; namely, to go, if necessary on foot, and carry His Father's Message to all the regions of the earth; but they are enhancing the prestige of the Faith to a remarkable degree in the eyes of the public, and specially in the eyes of the officials. There is no doubt that the rapid forward march of the Faith recently has attracted a far greater measure of attention on the part of the thoughtful people, and people of position in society and in educational fields, than has been the case for almost one hundred years.

"Therefore, each pioneer must feel his responsibility very heavily, and understand that his calling is far above the average service; and his duty to remain at his post a very pressing one indeed."

A reference to this prophecy from Daniel is one of the notable posthumous edits from John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by

Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

Comments

Original Index: 13 | Current Position: 22

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, ELIZABETH STAMP BECAME A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WHEN SHE ARRIVED IN ST. HELENA. BORN IN BAGENALSTOWN, IRELAND ON MARCH 25, 1887, SHE EMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES BECOMING A US CITIZEN AND RESIDING IN NEW YORK CITY WHERE SHE BECAME A BAHÁ'Í IN 1939.

submitted5 months agobyA35821363

May 4. On this date in 1954, Elizabeth Stamp became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh when she arrived in St. Helena. Born in Bagenalstown, Ireland on March 25, 1887, she emigrated to the United States becoming a US citizen and residing in New York City where she became a Bahá'í in 1939.

Elizabeth Stamp was born in Bagenalstown in Ireland on March 25, 1887 and was educated in Dublin. She emigrated to the United States becoming a US citizen and residing in New York City where she became a Bahá'í in 1939. She made travel teaching trips across the South and Midwest US while living in New York. Her husband passed while she was in New York.

In July 1953 at the opening of the Ten Year Crusade Elizabeth offered to pioneer to South Africa where her sister lived, however she ultimately decided to instead ask permission to pioneer to St. Helena, a virgin territory in the South Atlantic. She arrived there on May 4, 1954, and was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. The island was isolated at this time, with monthly ship arrivals being the only contact with the outside world, and Elizabeth asked for the thoughts and prayers of the Bahá'í community to support her. The Bishop of the Church of England on the island was initially unhappy with her presence but she eventually earned his respect and presented him with some Bahá'í literature. The strong position of the Church of England on the island meant she made little progress with teaching the Faith, however by 1964 four locals had converted to the Faith. She visited Elizabeth Hopper in Madeira while living on St. Helena.

In April 1963 Elizabeth was injured in a fall and went to South Africa to recover residing there until returning to St. Helena in December 1963, however she had to move to South Africa at the close of 1964 due to circumstances in St. Helena. She served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Durban while in South Africa.

Elizabeth Stamp returned to the United States in June 1966 settling in Waterbury, Connecticut, where she died on November 11, 1970, and was buried next to her husband.

Comments

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, SHOGHI EFFENDI APPOINTED SYLVIA IOAS TO THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL, SERVING BOTH AS AN APPOINTED AND ELECTED MEMBER. SHE WAS THE WIFE OF HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD LEROY IOAS, WHO ACCOMPANIED SHOGHI EFFENDI AND AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM FOR THEIR ...

submitted5 months agobyA35821363

May 4. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi appointed Sylvia Ioas to the International Bahá'í Council, serving both as an appointed and elected member. She was the wife of Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas, who accompanied Shoghi Effendi and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum for their May 26, 1952 visit of Israeli President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and was the author of a January 18, 1953, letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, later referenced in a Bahai News article in March 1953, defining the terms "Age" and "Epoch."

In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith* , Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting...

In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy , as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.

The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information

As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.

In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani,

World Head of the Bahá'í Faith,

Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

S. Eynath

Legal Adviser

The second letter was from Walter Eytan, Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and was written to Shoghi Effendi the following day. In it he says: "...Having done my best throughout to be of assistance to Your Eminence in the solution of these vexing problems, I heard with great satisfaction this morning that complete agreement had been reached. I sincerely trust that this puts an end to a period of anxiety for Your Eminence and the members of the Bahá'í Faith, and that you will now be able to proceed with your plans without further interference from any quarter."

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.

LETTER FROM HAIFA

DEFINES "AGES"

AND "EPOCHS"

In a letter dated January 18, 1953,

written on behalf of the Guardian by

Leroy Ioas, Assistant Secretary, the

terms "age" and "epoch" as used

by the Guardian are defined.

"The Faith is divided into three

Ages, the Heroic. the Formative, the

Golden Age, as has been outlined in

his writings. The Heroic Age closed with the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The Formative Age is divided into epochs. The first epoch lasted 25 years. We are now actually in the second epoch of the Formative Age. How long the Formative Age will last is not known - and there will probably be a number of epochs in it.

"The Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Baha is divided into epochs. The first Seven Year Plan constituted the first stage of the first epoch; the second Seven Year Plan constitutes the second stage; while the ten year Crusade will constitute the third stage of the first epoch of the Divine Plan. The first epoch of the Divine Plan will conclude with the conclusion of the ten year Crusade."

-NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Comments

Original Index: 15 | Current Position: 24

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1972, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF UGANDA "REGARDING THE INSCRIPTION ON A HEADSTONE...NOT TO USE ANY FORM OF THE GREATEST NAME BUT A NINE-POINTED STAR MAY BE USED...THE POSITION OF THE BODY IN THE GRAVE SHOULD BE WITH THE FEET POINTING TOWARD THE QIBLIH, WHICH IS BAHJI IN AKKA."

submitted5 months agobyA35821363

May 4. On this date in 1972, the UHJ wrote the NSA of Uganda "regarding the inscription on a headstone...not to use any form of the Greatest Name but a nine-pointed star may be used...The position of the body in the grave should be with the feet pointing toward the Qiblih, which is Bahji in Akka."

656. The Most Great Name or Ringstone Symbol Not Appropriate on Gravestones

"Normally the building of structures or headstones on graves should be left to the family of the deceased, and all expenses should be covered by them.

"The use of the Most Great Name or the ringstone symbol on gravestones is not appropriate. In a letter dated September 17, 1971 to an individual believer we wrote the following:

'Concerning the questions you ask in your postscript, there is no specific ruling regarding the type of headstone that may be used at a grave site. However, regarding the inscription on a headstone, the beloved Guardian asked the believers not to use any form of the Greatest Name but a nine-pointed star may be used. Or, you may wish to have an appropriate text from the Sacred Writings inscribed on the headstone. The position of the body in the grave should be with the feet pointing toward the Qiblih, which is Bahji in Akka'."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda, May 4, 1972)

Comments

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1997, THE UHJ WROTE AN NSA "REGARDING CONTACT THROUGH THE INTERNET BETWEEN THE FRIENDS AND COVENANT-BREAKER GROUPS...ANY PLANS THAT YOU HAVE TO ALERT THE FRIENDS TO COVENANT-BREAKER ACTIVITY ON THE INTERNET SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE UNDERTAKEN WITH WISDOM AND DISCRETION SO ..."

May 4. On this date in 1997, the UHJ wrote and NSA "regarding contact through the Internet between the friends and Covenant-breaker groups...Any plans that you have to alert the friends to Covenant-breaker activity on the Internet should, of course, be undertaken with wisdom and discretion so as to avoid giving Covenant-breakers more attention or prominence than they would otherwise receive."

Your email of 11 April 1997 regarding contact through the Internet between the friends and Covenant-breaker groups has been received by the Universal House of Justice. It is not possible to provide you with a list of Internet addresses of Covenant-breaker groups as you have requested, as no such listing is being maintained at the Bahá'í World Centre at this time.

Any plans that you have to alert the friends to Covenant-breaker activity on the Internet should, of course, be undertaken with wisdom and discretion so as to avoid giving Covenant-breakers more attention or prominence than they would otherwise receive.

(From a letter dated 4 May 1997 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

Comments

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1942, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "IF THE FRIENDS ALWAYS WAITED UNTIL THEY WERE FULLY QUALIFIED TO DO ANY PARTICULAR TASK, THE WORK OF THE CAUSE WOULD BE ALMOST AT A STANDSTILL! BUT THE VERY ACT OF STRIVING TO SERVE, HOWEVER UNWORTHY ONE MAY FEEL, ATTRACTS THE BLESSINGS OF GOD ..."

May 4. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "If the friends always waited until they were fully qualified to do any particular task, the work of the Cause would be almost at a standstill! But the very act of striving to serve, however unworthy one may feel, attracts the blessings of God and enables one to become more fitted for the task. Today the need is so great on the part of humanity to hear of the Divine Message, that the believers must plunge into the work, wherever and however they can, heedless of their own shortcomings, but ever heedful of the crying need of their fellow-men to hear of the teachings in their darkest hour of travail."

1952. If the friends always waited until they were fully qualified to do any particular task, the work of the Cause would be almost at a standstill! But the very act of striving to serve, however unworthy one may feel, attracts the blessings of God and enables one to become more fitted for the task.

Today the need is so great on the part of humanity to hear of the Divine Message, that the believers must plunge into the work, wherever and however they can, heedless of their own shortcomings, but ever heedful of the crying need of their fellow-men to hear of the teachings in their darkest hour of travail.

(From a letter dated 4 May 1942 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

Original Index: 1557 | Current Position: 27

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1946, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "...A SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORY, INCLUDING RELIGIOUS HISTORY, AND ALSO OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SUBJECTS, IS OF GREAT HELP IN TEACHING THE CAUSE TO INTELLIGENT PEOPLE..."

May 4. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...a sound knowledge of history, including religious history, and also of social and economic subjects, is of great help in teaching the Cause to intelligent people..."

1959. ...a sound knowledge of history, including religious history, and also of social and economic subjects, is of great help in teaching the Cause to intelligent people...

(From a letter dated 4 May 1946 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1992, THE UHJ WROTE THE TRUSTEE OF HUQÚQU'LLÁH 'ALÍ-MUHAMMAD VARQÁ A QUESTION "WHETHER THE PROPERTY ON WHICH A PERSON IS OBLIGED TO COMPUTE HIS HUQÚQU'LLÁH IS ALL THAT HE POSSESSES AT THE DATE ON WHICH THE LAW BECOMES APPLICABLE TO HIM, OR ONLY ON SUCH PROPERTY AS HE AMASSES.

May 4. On this date in 1992, the Universal House of Justice wrote the Trustee of Huqúqu'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá a question "whether the property on which a person is obliged to compute his Huqúqu'lláh is all that he possesses at the date on which the Law becomes applicable to him, or only on such property as he amasses subsequent to that date. Our conclusion is that the property which is assessable to Huqúqu'lláh is all that a person possesses on the date that the Law becomes applicable to him."

70. "The question is whether the property on which a person is obliged to…"

The question is whether the property on which a person is obliged to compute his Huqúqu'lláh is all that he possesses at the date on which the Law becomes applicable to him, or only on such property as he amasses subsequent to that date.

Our conclusion is that the property which is assessable to Huqúqu'lláh is all that a person possesses on the date that the Law becomes applicable to him. This does not mean, of course, that he must immediately pay the Huqúqu'lláh that is due, since to do so might require him to dispose of many of his belongings and place him in a very difficult situation. But the principle of computation is clear, and the Huqúqu'lláh due should ultimately be paid.

(4 May 1992, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the Trustee of Huqúqu'lláh, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá)

Comments

MAY 4. ON THIS DATE IN 1926, THE TORONTO DAILY STAR PUBLISHED AN OPEN LETTER FROM QUEEN MARIE OF ROMANIA ABOUT THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH. WHILE BAHÁ'Í SOURCES CLAIM QUEEN MARIE WAS THE FIRST MONARCH TO CONVERT TO THE FAITH, HER DAUGHTER ILEANA DENIED ANY SUCH CONVERSION HAD TAKEN PLACE.

May 4. On this date in 1926, the Toronto Daily Star published an open letter from Queen Marie of Romania about the Bahá'í Faith. While Bahá'í sources claim Queen Marie was the first monarch to convert to the faith, her daughter Ileana denied any such conversion had taken place.

From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

Among the things Queen Marie, who was not only a famous beauty, but an authoress and a woman of character and independence wrote in her "open letters" published during 1926, on 4 May and 28 September in the Toronto Daily Star and 27 September in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, were words such as these: "A woman brought me the other day a Book. I spell it with a capital letter because it is a glorious Book of love and goodness, strength and beauty...I commend it to you all. If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine. One's busy day may seem too full for religion. Or one may have a religion that satisfies. But the teachings of these gentle, wise and kindly men are compatible with all religion, and with no religion. Seek them, and be the happier." "At first we all conceive of God as something or somebody apart from ourselves...This is not so. We cannot, with our earthly faculties entirely grasp His meaning - no more than we can really understand the meaning of Eternity...God is all, Everything. He is the power behind all beginnings. he is the inexhaustible source of supply, of love, of good, of progress, of achievement. God is therefore Happiness. His is the voice within us that shows us good and evil. But mostly we ignore or misunderstand this voice. Therefore did He choose His Elect to come down amongst us upon earth to make clear His Word, His real meaning. Therefore the Prophets; therefore Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, for man needs from time to time a voice upon earth to bring God to him, to sharpen the realization of the existence of the true God. Those voices sent to us had to become flesh, so that with our earthly ears we should be able to hear and understand."

Shoghi Effendi wrote to Martha root on 29 May, after he had just received from Canada a copy of the first of the Queen's "open letters", that this was "a well deserved and memorable testimony of your remarkable and exemplary endeavours for the spread of our beloved Cause. It has thrilled me and greatly reinforced my spirit and strength, yours is a memorable triumph, hardly surpassed in its significance in the annals of the Cause." In that same letter he asks her to ponder the advisability of approaching Her Majesty with the news of the Jahrum martyrdoms and possibly enlisting her sympathy in the cause of the Persian persecutions. That this consideration influenced the Queen in making her further courageous statements on the Faith there can be no doubt, as her letter to Shoghi Effendi indicates that this was the case. The news of this victory had reached Shoghi Effendi on the eve of the commemoration of the passing of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji, at a time when, as he described it in one of his general letters, "...His sorrowing servants, had gathered round His beloved Shrine supplicating relief and deliverance for the down-trodden in Persia" and Shoghi Effendi goes on to say: "With bowed heads and grateful hearts we recognize in this glowing tribute which Royalty has thus paid to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh an epoch-making pronouncement destined to herald those stirring events which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has prophesied, shall in the fullness of time signalize the triumph of God's Holy Faith."

This marked the inception of a relationship not only with the Queen, but with other crowned heads and royalty in Europe on the part of Martha Root, and in a few instances of Shoghi Effendi himself. He not only greatly encouraged and guided her in these relationships but, always sincere in the human relationship, he nevertheless used these contacts to service the interests of the Cause through heightening its prestige in the eyes of the public and through seeing that they were pointedly brought to the attention of the enemies of the Faith.

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim:

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

Original Index: 1540 | Current Position: 30

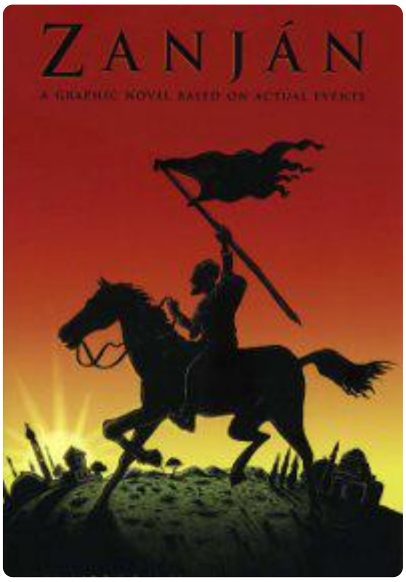
MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1850 THE BÁBIS OF ZANJAN ROSE IN ARMS AGAINST THE QAJAR GOVERNOR OF THE TOWN.

May 5. On this date in 1850 the Bábis of Zanjan rose in arms against the Qajar governor of the town.

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated.

Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb, on July 21, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at thebattle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.



Comments

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 2012, A PARENT OF A HOMOSEXUAL WROTE THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ABOUT A "STRUGGLE TO RECONCILE THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS" WITH THEIR PERSONAL VIEWS.

May 5. On this date in 2012, a parent of a homosexual wrote the Universal House of Justice about a "struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings" with their personal views.

Need for sympathy for those with a homosexual orientation and their need for struggle to overcome by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 2013-04-22 22 April 2013

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letters of 11 March 2011 and 5 May 2012 describing your struggle to reconcile the Bahá'í teachings with your own views on homosexuality, which have evolved as you have reflected on your relationship with your son. We have been asked to convey to you the following and in so doing express our regret that, owing to the pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre and the time necessary to carefully consider the many facets of your heartfelt questions, our reply has been so long delayed. The House of Justice appreciates the candour with which you have expressed your concerns, and your earnest desire to comprehend aspects of the teachings more fully is warmly acknowledged.

The understanding about human beings today is heavily influenced by materialistic assumptions. Perspectives of social movements, leaders of thought, and the media are shaped by them. Even the findings of science are interpreted according to such prevalent cultural notions. It is not surprising, then, that there are many ideas about human identity and behaviour in contemporary society commonly accepted as truths that conflict with the Bahá'í teachings. Yet, as Bahá'u'lláh asks every thoughtful soul, "Where shalt thou secure the cord of thy faith and fasten the tie of thine obedience?" His answer, revealed in innumerable passages, is, as you know, unambiguous. "The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind." "No man, however acute his perception," He affirms, "can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained." And He counsels not to weigh "the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring

Balance established amongst men", and in "this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed…." The Manifestation institutes His laws and ordinances in accordance with His intrinsic knowledge of human reality and His intended aims for individual and collective transformation. From a Bahá'í perspective, then, it is the teachings of the Manifestation of God that clarify the essential elements of human identity.

In contrast to many contemporary conceptions, the Bahá'í teachings maintain that a person must rise above certain material aspects of human nature to develop and manifest inherent spiritual qualities that characterize his or her true self. The Sacred Texts contain laws and exhortations that, in many instances, redirect or restrict behaviours that arise from impulses, tendencies, and desires, whether inborn or acquired. Some of these are physical, while others are emotional or psychological. Yet, whatever their origin, it is through their regulation and control that the higher, spiritual nature is able to predominate and flourish. Those who are not Bahá'ís may have no cause to take into account such considerations. A Bahá'í, however, cannot set aside the implications of these teachings and must endeavour to respond to the best of his or her ability, though it be little by little and day by day. In so doing, all believers face challenges, although the specific type or extent of a test may differ. They act with faith in Bahá'u'lláh's declaration, "Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures", and they respond to His call, "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty."

You have suggested that homosexuals could be made to feel as though they are "on the edges of society" and "inherently deficient", which would drive them away from the Faith. Such an outcome would be antithetical to the Bahá'í teachings. It may be reassuring to you to know that Shoghi Effendi has stated, in letters written on his behalf, that a Bahá'í who has a homosexual orientation must strive daily to come closer to the Bahá'í standard and, in this process, should be treated with tolerance and receive help, advice, and sympathy; he also acknowledges that such an inclination can be "a great burden to a conscientious soul" and states that those concerned should "adhere to their Faith, and not withdraw from active service, because of the tests they experience" since, "in one way or another, we are all tested; and this must strengthen us, not weaken us." Whatever the particular challenge he or she may face, through the recognition of Bahá'u'lláh and steadfast effort to abide by His teachings and to serve humanity, every believer can have a rich and rewarding Bahá'í life.

Although they affirm their conviction that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings reflect God's purpose for humankind in this Day, Bahá'ís do not seek to impose their values on others. They do not pass judgement on others on the basis of their own moral standards and can never presume to know the standing of any soul in the eyes of God. Rather, the friends are enjoined to show forth unconditional love, to engage in fellowship with all, and to be forbearing, concerned with their own shortcomings and not those of others. They are to have a sin-covering eye, focusing on good qualities and ignoring the bad, and they must eschew backbiting and gossip. As the Bahá'í community continues to grow and develop, increasing its involvement with the wider society, such characteristics will become more pronounced and a hallmark of Bahá'í culture. Given this, to regard those with a homosexual orientation with prejudice or disdain, the House of Justice has repeatedly emphasized, would be entirely against the spirit of the Faith. In response to your question about the position a Bahá'í would take in relation to supporting the human rights of homosexuals, we have enclosed a copy of a letter dated 27 October 2010 written on behalf of the House of Justice to an individual believer that discusses this topic, and it is hoped the guidance contained therein will allay any concern you may have.

As to the possibility of same-sex marriage within the Faith, according to the teachings, Bahá'í marriage is a union between a man and a woman. This is set forth in the Writings and is not susceptible to change by the House of Justice.

You have also asked how you should deal with the conflict you face in being a Bahá'í while struggling to appreciate certain aspects of the teachings, and you wonder whether you should withdraw from the Faith or simply acknowledge that on this point you have a different view. It can be helpful to consider that, on occasion, a believer may discover that a personal understanding differs to some degree from the teachings. How can it be otherwise, when our conceptions are forged in a social milieu that Bahá'u'lláh has come to radically transform? "An exact and thorough comprehension of so vast a system, so sublime a revelation, so sacred a trust," Shoghi Effendi reminds us, "is for obvious reasons beyond the reach and ken of our finite minds." A sensible approach is simply to recognize that the human mind is both finite and fallible and that acquiring spiritual insight and greater understanding is a gradual and ever-unfolding process that requires time, continued study, reflection on action, and consultation with others. This perspective is quite different, however, from contending with or attempting to change explicit provisions of the Faith. Humility is required, rather than an insistence that one's personal views at any given time are correct. Thus, there is no reason why you should feel a need to withdraw from the Bahá'í community. Rather you are encouraged to keep an open mind and acknowledge, like every other Bahá'í, that there are elements of the Revelation that you are striving to understand more fully. This does not prevent you from showing forth unconditional love and support for your son.

You are assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that you and your son may be the recipients of heavenly blessings and bestowals.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Comments

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1937, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "'ABDU'L-BAHÁ SAID THAT THAT THE SITE OF THE MANGER IN BETHLEHEM IS THE ONLY AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN SITE IN PALESTINE....JERUSALEM WILL BE THE LAST STRONGHOLD OF CHRISTIANITY. THERE ARE VERY POWERFUL FORCES NOW AT WORK THERE ALLIED WITH THE GOVERNMENT."

May 5. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "'Abdu'l-Bahá said that that the site of the manger in Bethlehem is the only authentic Christian site in Palestine. There are two reasons for visiting Jerusalem. First to see the Holy places, and second to contrast them to those in Haifa and Bahji. Jerusalem will be the last stronghold of Christianity. There are very powerful forces now at work there allied with the government. Some of the members of the government in Jerusalem are missionaries. They are first imperialists and then missionaries."

Comments

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, A LETTER WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI STATED THAT "HE IS SURPRISED THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY FELLOW-BAHÁ'ÍS THAT YOU COULD HAVE A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE...YOU WILL LOSE YOUR VOTING RIGHTS."

May 5. On this date in 1957, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "he is surprised that you should have been advised by fellow-Bahá'ís that you could have a Christian marriage, in view of the fact that you are both Bahá'ís. It is only fair to tell you that, **if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights.**"

5 May 1957

Miss ... and Mr.....

Dear .....,

Your letter of April 23rd has been received by the beloved Guardian, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

The question of your marriage is one which is clearly understood by the National Assembly, and the Guardian thought by most of the believers; and he is surprised that you should have been advised by fellow-Bahá'ís that you could have a Christian marriage, in view of the fact that you are both Bahá'ís.

It is only fair to tell you that, **if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights.**

You did quite right to obtain the permission of your parents; and he hopes that now you will be able to extricate yourselves from this difficult position you find yourselves in, without angering Mr......

As you are aware, the Guardian feels that the Bahá'ís must, in view of the condition of the world today, stand forth firmly and courageously as followers of Bahá'u'lláh, obeying His Laws, and seeking to build his World Order. Through compromise we will never be able to establish our Faith or win others' hearts to it. This involves often great personal sacrifice, but we know that, when we do the right thing, God gives us the strength to carry it out, and we attract His blessings. We learn at such times that our calamity is indeed a blessing.

He will pray for the satisfactory solution of your problem.

With warm Bahá'í greetings, R. Rabbani.

May the Almighty guide, bless & sustain you, & aid you to promote the vital interests of His Faith,

Your true brother, Shoghi

Comments

Original Index: 1544 | Current Position: 34

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "BAHÁ'ÍS MUST, IN VIEW OF THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD TODAY, STAND FORTH FIRMLY AND COURAGEOUSLY AS FOLLOWERS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, OBEYING HIS LAWS, AND SEEKING TO BUILD HIS WORLD ORDER. THROUGH COMPROMISE WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH OUR ..."

May 5. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'ís must, in view of the condition of the world today, stand forth firmly and courageously as followers of Bahá'u'lláh, obeying His Laws, and seeking to build his World Order. Through compromise we will never be able to establish our Faith or win others' hearts to it. This involves often great personal sacrifice, but we know that, when we do the right thing, God gives us the strength to carry it out, and we attract His blessings. We learn at such times that our calamity is indeed a blessing."

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It is only fair to tell you that, if as registered believers you are married in a Christian ceremony, you will lose your voting rights.

You did quite right to obtain the permission of your parents; and he hopes that now you will be able to extricate yourselves from this difficult position you find yourselves in, without angering Mr......

As you are aware, the Guardian feels that the Bahá'ís must, in view of the condition of the world today, stand forth firmly and courageously as followers of

Bahá'u'lláh, obeying His Laws, and seeking to build his World Order. Through compromise we will never be able to establish our Faith or win others' hearts to it. This involves often great personal sacrifice, but we know that, when we do the right thing, God gives us the strength to carry it out, and we attract His blessings. We learn at such times that our calamity is indeed a blessing.

He will pray for the satisfactory solution of your problem.

With warm Bahá'í greetings, R. Rabbani.

May the Almighty guide, bless & sustain you, & aid you to promote the vital interests of His Faith,

Your true brother, Shoghi

Comments

Original Index: 1545 | Current Position: 35

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1947, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "NO ONE HAS ANY RIGHT TO SEE THE COVENANT-BREAKERS WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE N.S.A....IN DOING SO SHOULD REALIZE SHE IS PUTTING HERSELF IN CONTACT WITH A DANGEROUS, CONTAGIOUS, SPIRITUAL DISEASE, AS THE MASTER POINTED OUT OVER AND OVER AGAIN!"

May 5. On this date in 1947, Shoghi Effendi wrote "No one has any right to see the Covenant-Breakers without the permission of the N.S.A., and Mrs. ... in doing so should realize she is putting herself in contact with a dangerous, contagious, spiritual disease, as the Master pointed out over and over again! She is also disobeying express instructions of the Master and the Guardian by contacting Covenant-Breakers."

608. No One Has the Right to See Covenant-Breakers Without Permission

"No one has any right to see the Covenant-Breakers without the permission of the N.S.A., and Mrs. ... in doing so should realize she is putting herself in contact with a dangerous, contagious, spiritual disease, as the Master pointed out over and over again! She is also disobeying express instructions of the Master and the Guardian by contacting Covenant-Breakers."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to two individual believers, May 5, 1947)

Spiritual
Disease

Comments

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED "THE HOUR IS RIPE TO DISENCUMBER THEMSELVES OF WORLDLY VANITIES, TO MOUNT THE STEED OF STEADFASTNESS, UNFURL THE BANNER OF RENUNCIATION, DON THE ARMOR OF UTTER CONSECRATION TO GOD'S CAUSE, GIRD THEMSELVES WITH THE GIRDLE OF A CHASTE AND ..."

May 5. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cable stating "The hour is ripe to disencumber themselves of worldly vanities, to mount the steed of steadfastness, unfurl the banner of renunciation, don the armor of utter consecration to God's Cause, gird themselves with the girdle of a chaste and holy life, unsheathe the sword of Bahá'u'lláh's utterance, buckle on the shield of His love, carry as sole provision implicit trust in His promise, flee their homelands, and scatter far and wide to capture the unsurrendered territories of the entire planet."

1936. Flee Their Homelands

"...The hour is ripe to disencumber themselves of worldly vanities, to mount the steed of steadfastness, unfurl the banner of renunciation, don the armor of utter consecration to God's Cause, gird themselves with the girdle of a chaste and holy life, unsheathe the sword of Bahá'u'lláh's utterance, buckle on the shield of His love, carry as sole provision implicit trust in His promise, flee their homelands, and scatter far and wide to capture the unsurrendered territories of the entire planet."

(From cablegram of the Guardian, May 5, 1953: Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 49)

Comments

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1960, IN THE WAKE OF THE NSA OF FRANCE'S ACCEPTANCE OF MASON REMEY'S CLAIM TO THE GUARDIANSHIP, THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF IN THE HOLY LAND SENT A LETTER TO THE NSA ANNOUNCING THE VISIT OF HAND OF THE CAUSE ABU'L-QASIM FAIZI. THE NSA WOULD BE DECLARED COVENANT-BREAKERS.

May 5. On this date in 1960, in the wake of the NSA of France's acceptance of Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship, the Hands of the Cause of in the Holy Land sent a letter to the NSA of France announcing the imminent visit of Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qasim Faizi to France. The NSA would be declared Covenant-breakers.

To the National Spiritual Assembly and the Believers of France

May 5, 1960

Dear Friends,

The Hands in the Holy Land are sending the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, to France, to meet with the National Spiritual Assembly and the Bahá'ís of France, and to act on behalf of the Hands for the protection of the Faith in the situation created by Mr. Remey's unfounded claim.

Mr. Faizi, will act in accordance with instructions given him by the Hands in the Holy Land. He is empowered to take whatever steps may be necessary to carry out these instructions.

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

Sertorius126: Good.Of note. The French NSA was 5-4 to accept Remey.Over the next few decades each of the 5 members declared themselves to be the Guardian and excommunicated each other.

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1916, PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON SENT A TELEGRAM TO THE US NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION EXPRESSING HIS "GRATITUDE TO ALL CONCERNED." WILSON PRINCIPLES WERE LAUDED BY 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ AND SHOGHI EFFENDI. AN AVOWED FOREIGN INTERVENTIONIST, IMPERIALIST, AND SOCIAL DARWINIST WHO ...

May 5. On this date in 1916, President Woodrow Wilson sent a telegram to the US National Bahá'í Convention expressing his "gratitude to all concerned." Wilsonian principles were lauded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. An avowed foreign interventionist, imperialist, and Social Darwinist who spread racial segregation in the federal government, Wilson's legacy is still defended by the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

The White House, Washington, May 5, 1916. My dear Mr Hall, the telegram you sent me on behalf of Bahá'ís of America, assembled in annual convention, has given me the deepest gratification and I hope you will have an opportunity to express my gratitude to all concerned. Cordially and sincerely yours, /s/ Woodrow Wilson.

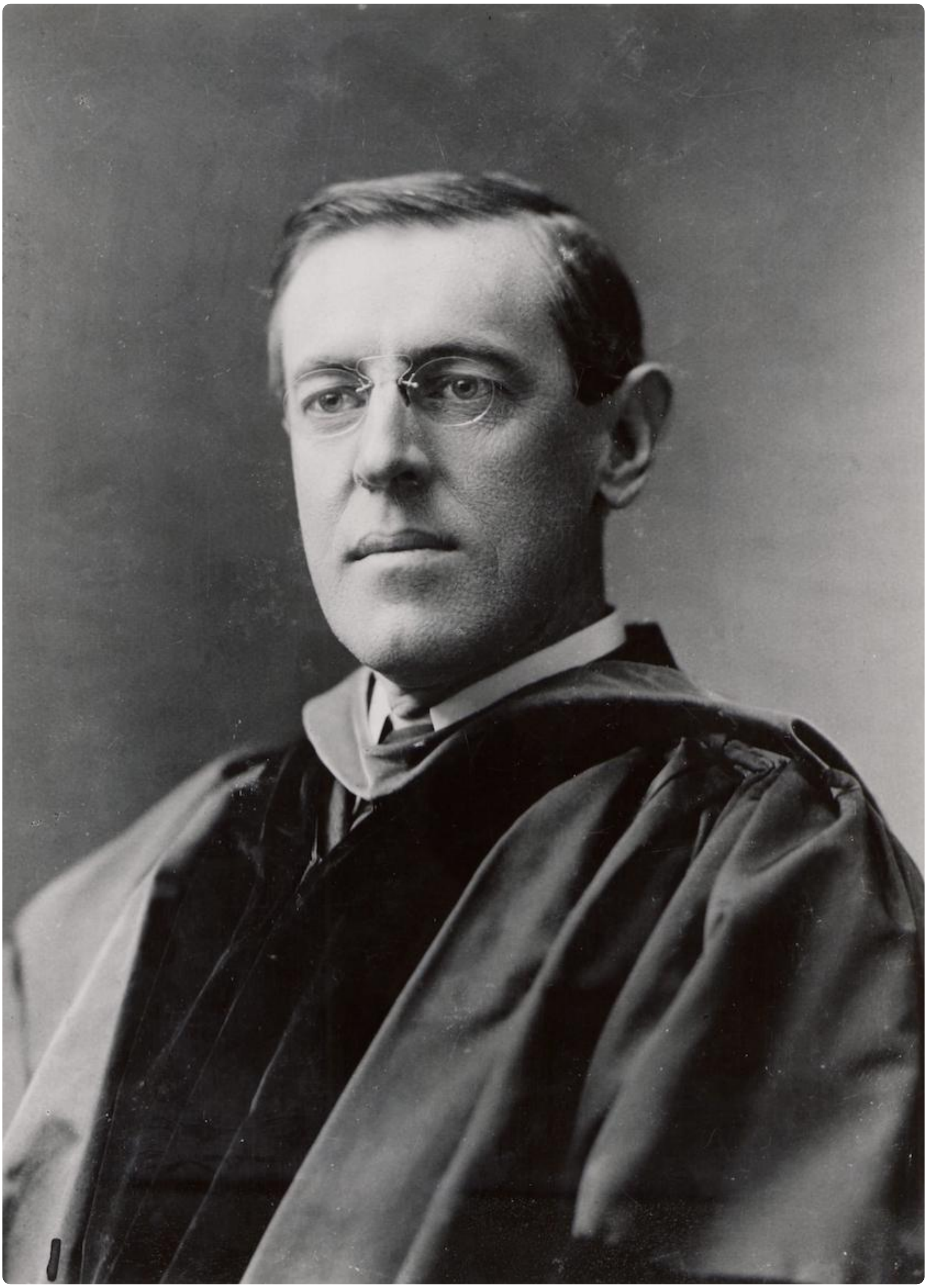
On September 22, 1912, during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the home of William Jennings Bryan in Lincoln, Nebraska. William Jennings Bryan was not home at the time, however, as he was busy campaigning for Woodrow Wilson in whose administration he would serve as Secretary of State. 'Abdu'l-Bahá met his wife and daughter instead. Reports of a Wilson-Bahá'í connection began to circulate among American Bahá'ís during Wilson's term as President from 1913 to 1921.

'Abdu'l-Bahá would later praise President Woodrow Wilson...

The President of the Republic, Dr. Wilson, is indeed serving the Kingdom of God for he is restless and strives day and night that the rights of all men may be preserved safe and secure, that even small nations, like greater ones, may dwell in peace and comfort, under the protection of Righteousness and Justice. This purpose is indeed a lofty one. I trust that the incomparable Providence will assist and confirm such souls under all conditions.

On December 25, 1938 Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter, later published as *The Advent of Divine Justice* addressed "to the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada," describing the role of America in establishing the Most Great Peace. The work is divided into five parts. The fifth section provides some concluding remarks. Shoghi Effendi states that American Bahá'í's faithfulness to the Bahá'í Faith has potentiated the United States to establish the Most Great Peace. Shoghi Effendi comments on contemporary events, lamenting America's move away from Wilsonianism, "The ideals that fired the imagination of America's tragically unappreciated President, whose high endeavors, however much nullified by a visionless generation, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, through His own pen, acclaimed as signalizing the dawn of the Most Great Peace, though now lying in the dust, bitterly reproach a heedless generation for having so cruelly abandoned them."

Wilson's legacy is still defended by the Bahá'í Administrative Order.



Comments

Original Index: 1549 | Current Position: 39

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1964, RICHARD NOLEN DIED. HE WAS A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE AZORES.

May 5. On this date in 1964, Richard Nolen died. He was a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Azores.

Richard Nolen was born in Almont, Michigan on March 14, 1914. At the age of five he contracted rheumatic fever which left him with a defective heart and curtailed his physical activity all his life. Compelled to seek quiet pursuits he devoted a deep love of good music and a burning thirst for spiritual truth. As a young man he composed and arranged orchestral music and played in local orchestras. He investigated religion. In 1948, through an advertisement in the area newspaper, he learned of the Bahá'í Faith and met Kenneth and Roberta Christian in Lansing, Michigan. He immediately converted to the Bahá'í Faith and participated in local, state and national activities.

Responding to the call of Shoghi Effendi for pioneers in the Ten Year Crusade, Nolen and his family (Lois A. (Warner), Linda Jean, Cynthia and John) immediately volunteered to go to a virgin territory. It was suggested by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that he go to the Azores Islands where the climate is mild. He resigned his job as a draftsman, disposed of his home and household furnishings, and with his wife and three children boarded a freighter which brought them to the Azores on October 8, 1953. For this action, Mr. and Mrs. Nolen were designated Knights of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi.

After a period of physical hardship, and handicapped in his search for employment because of lack of knowledge of the Portuguese language, Mr. Nolen found work with a building contractor at a United States air base and later he was employed by the United States Government as a draftsman at Lajes Air Force base on Terceira Island. Life became considerably easier. Mr. Nolen applied himself diligently to a study of the Portuguese language in order to equip himself to teach the Faith. he traveled to all nine islands in the group, teaching, presenting literature and made several trips to meet the Bahá'ís of Portugal and Germany.

At Riḍván 1958, the first Spiritual Assembly was formed on Terceira Island but it was not until December of that year that the first two native believers embraced the Faith. By 1961 the local religious authorities grew concerned. The International Police summoned

Mr. Nolen and advised him that he must discontinue teaching the Bahá'í Faith or leave the island. Despite these obstacles the Spiritual Assembly continued to meet and study classes were held in Bahá'í homes. A functioning body of believers was left in the Azores when Mr. Nolen's failing health led to his reluctant decision, in 1962, to return to the United States.

Two more children had been born to the Nolens (Christopher Lee and Sylvia Louise) in the Azores, and although the eldest daughter (Linda) had matured and returned to America earlier, there was still a family of six who settled in Tacoma, Washington, in August 1962 and enjoyed the sorely missed activities of Bahá'í schools, institutes and conventions. Mr. Nolen now enjoyed the bounty of unfettered teaching of the Faith he loved.

After a prolonged illness which confined him to hospital, Richard Nolen died on May 5, 1964.

Comments

Original Index: 1550 | Current Position: 40

MAY 5. ON THIS DATE IN 1943, A LETTER WRITTEN IN BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "THE FRIENDS SHOULD BY ALL MEANS BE ENCOURAGED TO WITHDRAW FROM CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND BE MADE TO REALIZE THAT ..."

May 5. On this date in 1943, a letter written in behalf of Shoghi Effendi said "The friends should by all means be encouraged to **withdraw from church membership** and be made to realize that, though we as Bahá'ís are ardent believers in Christ, we do not and cannot support, church institutions and doctrines when **Christ has come again and brought new laws for the world today and its present needs; to adhere to forms, mostly man-made, and now out-moded and no longer needed, is meaningless. This does not mean they should no longer associate with the church members; they should cease to be registered members of it."**

533. Bahá'ís Are Ardent Believers in Christ

"The friends should by all means be encouraged to withdraw from church membership and be made to realize that, though we as Bahá'ís are ardent believers in Christ, we do not and cannot support, church institutions and doctrines when Christ has come again and brought new laws for the world today and its present needs; to adhere to forms, mostly man-made, and now out-moded and no longer needed, is meaningless. This does not mean they should no longer associate with the church members; they should cease to be registered members of it."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 5, 1943)

On February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate yourself from it.** Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá’í-Christian, a Bahá’í-Freemason, a Bahá’í-Jew, Bahá’í-Mohammedan.”

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá’ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

October 1921

In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!

Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: “Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, ‘Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.’ Now the same condition prevails.”

This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, “What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?” let them answer: “We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu’l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant.”

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá'ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient

"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.

"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like

"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.

"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

Comments

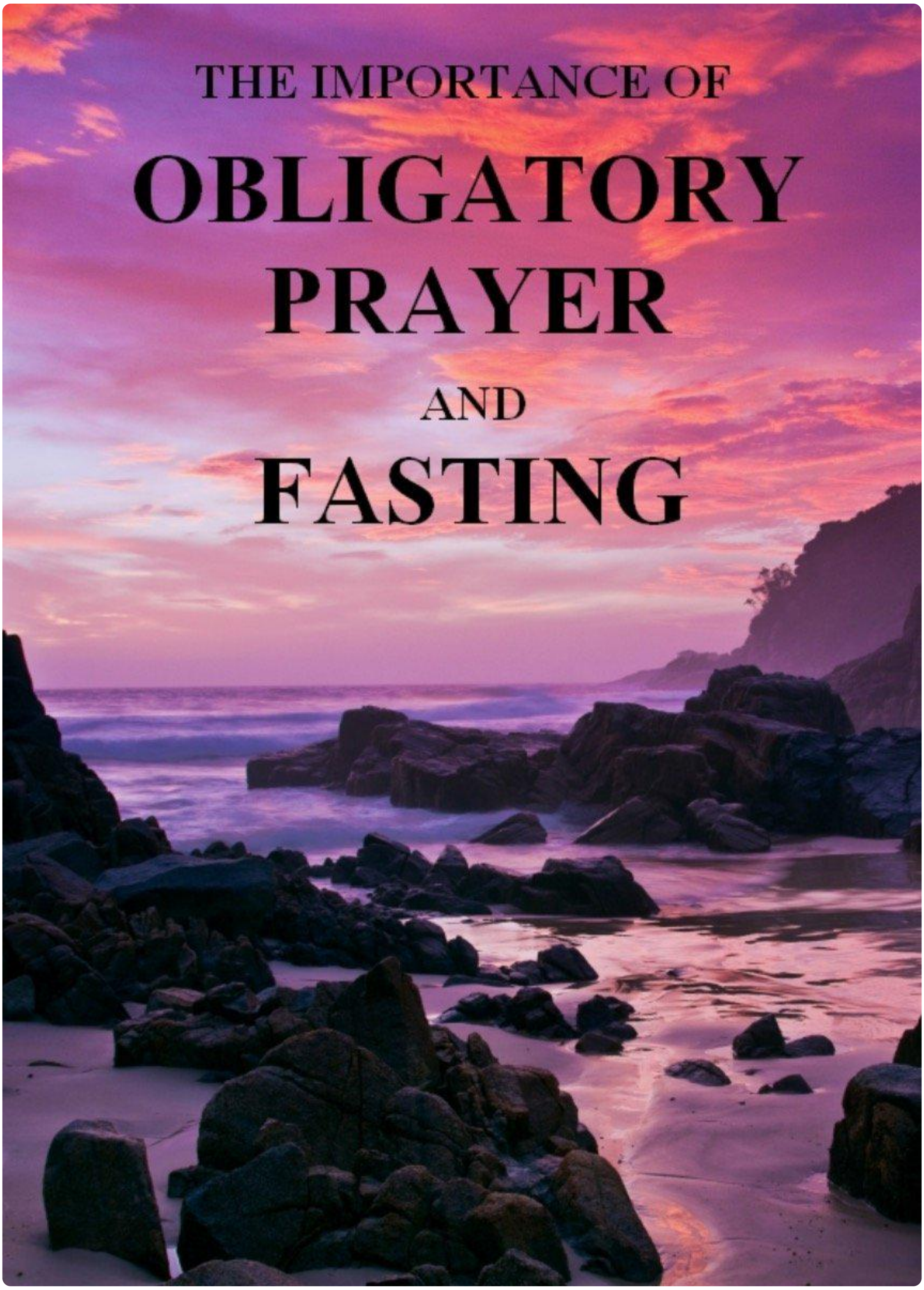
MAY 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1966, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED STATES THAT IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO SET OBLIGATORY PRAYERS TO MUSIC.

May 6. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that it is not appropriate to set obligatory prayers to music.

1367. Not Appropriate to Set Obligatory Prayers to Music

"We have not come across any instructions which would prohibit the setting of the obligatory prayers to music. However, because of their special nature, we do not consider it appropriate to do so."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, May 6, 1966)


THE IMPORTANCE OF OBLIGATORY PRAYER AND FASTING

Comments

MAY 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1857, CHARLES GREENLEAF, A DISCIPLE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, WAS BORN. HE WOULD SERVE ON THE ALL-MALE CHICAGO HOUSE OF SPIRITUALITY, WHICH WAS COMPLEMENTED BY THE WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY OF TEACHING. WHEN TODAY'S SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES BECOME HOUSES OF JUSTICE, THEY WILL ONCE MORE ....

May 6. On this date in 1857, Charles Greenleaf, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, was born. He would serve on the all-male Chicago House of Spirituality, which was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching. When today's Spiritual Assemblies become Houses of Justice, they will once more be exclusively male.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12.

On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandarání of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

(30 November 1930)

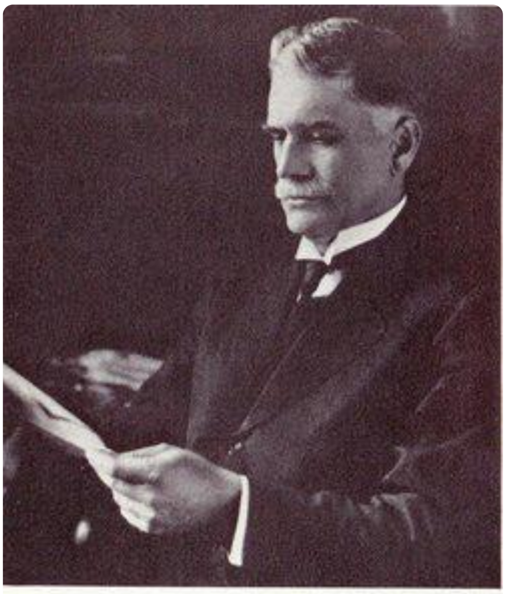
On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.

"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.



CHARLES GREENLEAF

Comments

MAY 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1984, AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM BEGAN HER 17 DAY TOUR OF SOUTH KOREA.

May 6. On this date in 1984, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum began her 17 day tour of South Korea.

Jack Davis describes this stay in his article Glimpse of Ruhiyyih Khanum and Her 17 Days in Korea. A March 30, 2010 article in *The Korea Herald* quoted Firaydun Mithaq as saying "the number of the Bahá'ís in Korea is not over 200 active believers."

Glimpse of Ruhiyyih Khanum and Her 17 Days in Korea by Jack Davis She said while here that once Shoghi Effendi asked her what she would do after his passing. She said she was so astonished by the question which she had not thought about, that she just looked at him. He answered that you will travel and teach and love the people. Since 1957 she has certainly done just that. Even reigning queens of bygone ages are largely recorded by history in terms of dates and events, as they had very little effect on the people. Not one of them could be said to have had influence over the entire world.

Indeed we stand too close to Ruhiyyih Khanum to fully grasp her influence and station. If the station of the Hands of the Cause is higher than that of the lesser prophets of the old like Isaiah, Daniel and others, how limited is our understanding of their true rank. What woman of past dispensations was not only the marriage partner of the Head of the Faith, but his confidante, friend, secretary and solace, as well as being an active believer, teacher, author and a high-ranking individual in her own right? Ruhiyyih Khanum has a very distinct and interesting personality, characterized by a sense of humor, an incisively probing mind, true courtesy and warmth, and yet it is basically very simple.

The likes of Ruhiyyih Khanum, nee Mary Maxwell, will never pass this way again. There has been no such woman in the past 6,000 years of recorded history, nor will there be another like her, at least not until after the next Manifestation of God in a thousand years. She came to Korea in May of 1984 for seventeen glorious days … and she conquered it.

Over 30 of the friends waited at the Kimpo International airport with a huge banner screaming, “WELCOME”! She ‘appeared’ from out of the door of customs, and began greeting the Baha'is, posed for a picture with flowers presented to her, and was off to her hotel. It seemed as if unconsciously the noise in the crowded airport went down a quantum jump – to a hush.

The next day was a free one for her. **She visited a famous acupuncturist, as she did during all the days in Seoul, and when she came out she said, "We are relaxed, happy, confident and secure." Later she said of him, "We should be grateful this man is on this earth … he knows what he is talking about." He said about her that she was a "living god".**

The public meeting on the 8th, held in a gorgeous emerald green room in the prestigious Lotte Hotel, attracted over 100 people. It was Buddha's Birthday, a holiday and one day after the Pope has left Korea, so the attendance was amazing. Her dignity, ability to make people feel at ease, to feel that the Faith is really so simple, her perfect diction and melodious voice captivated as usual.

She gave a simple, logical explanation, and, interestingly enough near the end spoke of the persecutions. She told of a mother and a daughter on the bus going to prison to be hanged. The mother, to quite her daughter's fears, said in comforting and sweet way, "Don't worry. I will ask the guards to hang me first, and then you will see that it is not so bad."

At the luncheon the following day with the local pioneers and two Japanese who had come just for her visit, when someone tried to take her plate away thinking that she was finished, she said, **"Oh, no! Two-hundred-million Chinese are starving to death and another four-hundred-million are almost starving, so the least I can do is finish everything on my plate."**

She talked about the process of deepening people who accept the Faith. "It means", she said, "'go back', just go back and they will be deepened."

At the Press Conference with reporters from 3 Seoul dailies, she said to them that it didn't really matter to her whether they wrote anything about what she said or not, however she hoped that they as young men and women would look into this Faith, and whether they accepted it or not was not the point.

"It is just that you should know what it will come to mean in the world." She added, "If you want a headline, I can give you one: 'A Religion At Last That Practices What It Preaches.'!"

One reporter over coffee said that she was beautiful. She retorted, "You should have seen me 30 years ago!"

Articles were printed, not only in Seoul, but in Pusan, Kwang and Taejeon. She met with a reporter of the government news agency for a special interview.

On her travels throughout the country she was accompanied by Violette Nakhjavani, the National Assembly Secretary, Mr Jeong Ha Tack, and many others who would join at different times to be with her or to translate. Besides Seoul, she visited about 10 other localities, including cities, town and rural areas. In Mokpo her talk of the importance of the Institutions vied with the horns and other traffic noises outside the window.

Going on the boat to Anjwa, she was sitting on the bow much to consternation of the crew and friends. But when cautioned, she said, "Please leave me alone. I know what I am doing."

She later suggested to the Universal House of Justice that a Center should be built on the island in the area of several islands with hundreds and hundreds of Baha'is.

In Pusan, Kwangju, Sinchon and Kumi, she stressed, among other things how important it is to deepen in the Teachings. She likened the necessity of this to the way a tree grows strong. The heavy winds and rain force its roots to go deep. Tests and studying help us to put out spiritual roots down deep.

In Kumi she met the Mayor of the city in a most cordial atmosphere. At public meetings in Daegu, Keong Sang North and Anyang, a suburb of Seoul, her references to the simple one-nesses of the Faith, the education of children and, in one case, a reference to suffering of the friends in Iran captivated those attending.

During free time, she visited several Buddhist Temples in different areas. The Chief Monk of one Temple instantly and reverently recognized her spirit and [after] they had a long talk, he accepted the principles of the oneness of religion. She promised him a book which was later delivered. She also toured museums, and visited the grave of a famous General, Kim Yu Sin, in Kyungju, and went to the Haing Nam Ceramic center.

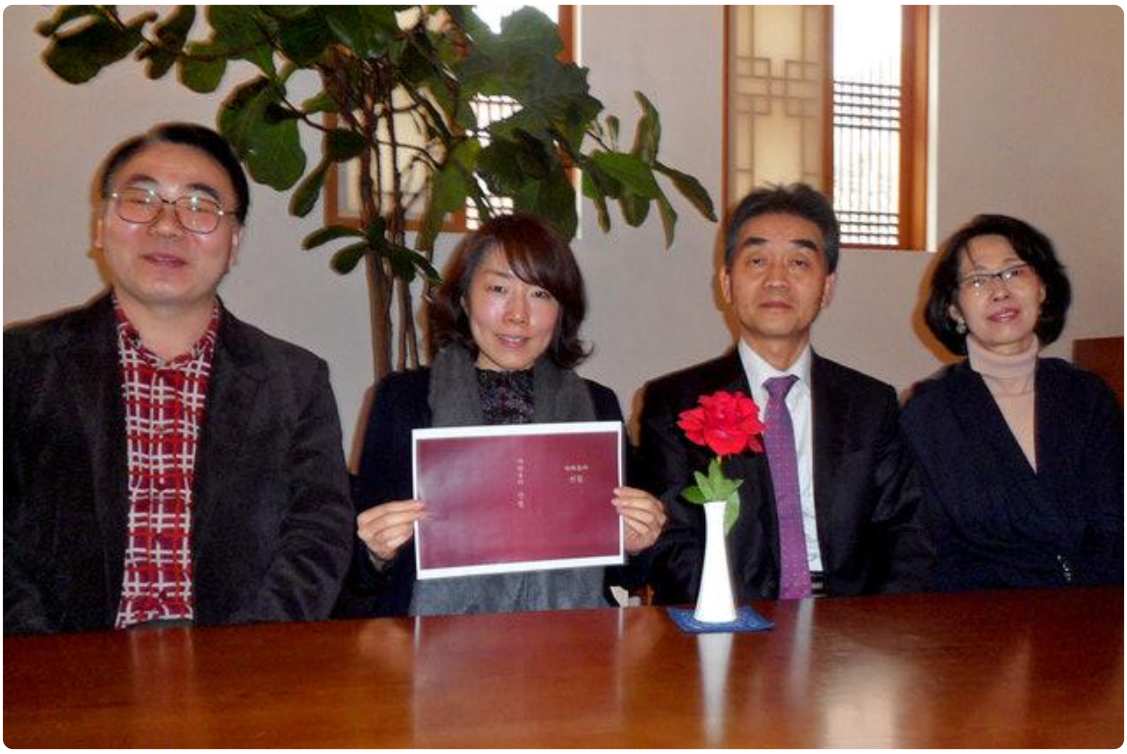
Many of the Korean friends were impressed by her praying in the Temples, her childlike innocence, frankness and delighted at all she saw. She remarked to them, **"You are a good-looking people, especially your noses."**

She exclaimed over the deliciousness of Korean food, and in general showed her deep appreciation of things Korean.

There was a dinner on her last evening in Seoul in celebration of the Declaration of the Bab. While still at the table she cut out a paper ballerina doll for one of the little girls, colored it, and before giving it to the child, asked, "What shall we name her? Let's call her 'Mary', my name."

Later, slides were shown of the Holy Land and particularly of the Shrine of the Bab. Ruhiyyih Khanum spoke of her father's part in its construction under the direction of Shoghi Effendi.

Ruhiyyih Khanum felt that her trip was a success. The friends will never be quite the same. She gave glimpses of other dimensions of what it means to be a Baha'i. A vision of ourselves as Baha'is and of future of the Faith were lovingly and clearly implanted in the hearts of over six-hundred souls who met her during the seventeen memorable days. The Korean friends gained a new understanding of their role and a stronger grasp of a statement made in London by Ruhiyyih Khanum herself: "The Faith of Baha'u'llah belongs to all those who believe in Him."



Comments

Original Index: 1538 | Current Position: 44

MAY 6. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, A LETTER WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI STATED "WHAT THE GUARDIAN FEELS IT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE FRIENDS TO DO IS TO TEACH THE CAUSE DIRECTLY AND BY MEANS OF IMPARTING THE HOLY WORDS...."

May 6. On this date in 1936, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "What the Guardian feels it of vital importance for the friends to do is to teach the Cause directly and by means of imparting the Holy Words...."

1944. What the Guardian feels it of vital importance for the friends to do is to teach the Cause directly and by means of imparting the Holy Words....

(From a letter dated 6 May 1936 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Comments

MAY 6. ON THIS DATE IN 2001, THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT ADDRESSED A LETTER TO AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER CONCERNING "DEFENDING THE CAUSE AGAINST OPPONENTS ON THE INTERNET."

May 6. On this date in 2001, The Bahá'í World Centre Department of the Secretariat addressed a letter to an individual believer concerning "Defending the Cause against Opponents on the Internet," stating in part "Under most circumstances, it would seem worse than futile for a Bahá'í to attempt to defend the institutions or members of the Faith... Similarly, for believers to be drawn into discussion of subjects which the Writings themselves tell us will find clarification only through the passing of time, such as the wisdom of Bahá'u'lláh's limiting membership of the Universal House of Justice to men, the full implication of the Will and Testament, and the process by which the Bahá'í Commonwealth will emerge, would tend to divert attention from real and pressing issues... Where opposition chooses to assail the Faith on points where scholarly expertise in a particular field is required, the challenge to respond falls directly on those believers who are thus qualified, and the Bahá'í community is fortunate in having the human resources necessary to this purpose. For discussions that are of a more general nature, a wider number of the friends will be in a position to provide helpful comment. While the initiative in all such matters rests primarily with the individual believer, the institutions of the Faith are in a position to offer guidance on how the Faith's interests can best be served. Indeed, where discussions of this kind have a direct and immediate impact on the perception of the Faith among the non-Bahá'í public, the Guardian has emphasized the importance of the friends' seeking 'the guidance and approval of the National Spiritual Assembly' in all attempts to counter open attacks on the Cause"

Comments

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1963, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SENT ITS SECOND MESSAGE, WHICH IT ADDRESSED TO NATIONAL CONVENTIONS.

May 7. On this date in 1963, the Universal House of Justice sent its second message, which it addressed to National Conventions.

Message to National Conventions — 1963 The marvelous happenings which have transpired during and immediately after the twelve days of Ridván attest the greatness of the Cause of God, and fill every Bahá'í heart to overflowing with joy and gratitude. It was in obedience to the summons of the Lord of Hosts Himself that the elected representatives of the fifty-six national and regional communities of the Bahá'í world were called to elect, in the shadow of God's Holy Mountain and in the house of the Center of His Covenant, the members of the Universal House of Justice. It was the Sign of God on earth, the Dayspring of Divine Guidance, the Guardian of the Cause of God, who gathered more than six thousand Bahá'ís from all parts of the earth to the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee in London.

The first of these historic occasions was marked by events of extreme spiritual and administrative significance at the World Center of the Faith. The daily visits of large groups of believers, of many varying backgrounds, to the sacred shrines in the twin holy cities; the holding of the first International Bahá'í Convention and the successful accomplishment of its main task; the celebration of the Ridván Feast by some three hundred believers in the company of the Hands of the Cause of God in the precincts of the Haram-i-Aqdas, are events of unique character and untold significance in the history of our beloved Faith.

The celebration of the Most Great Jubilee in London must be described elsewhere. Suffice it to say now that this greatest gathering of Bahá'ís ever held in one place was permeated by a spirit of such bliss as could only have come from the outpourings of the Abhá Kingdom. The review of the progress of the Cause; the presentation of believers from the new races and countries of the world brought within the pale of the Faith during the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, those valiant souls who carried the banner of Bahá'u'lláh to the unopened and often inhospitable regions of the earth; the spontaneous outbursts of singing of " Alláh-u-

Abhá," the informal gatherings, the constant greetings of Bahá'u'lláh's warriors known to each other only by name and service; the youth gatherings; the unprecedented publicity in the press, on radio and television; the daily stream of visitors to the beloved Guardian's resting-place; the radiant faces and heightened awareness of the true and real brotherhood of the human race within the Kingdom of the Everlasting Father, are among the outstanding events of this supreme occasion, the crowning victory of the life work of Shoghi Effendi.

REAFFIRMING A TRIBUTE

The Universal House of Justice wishes to reaffirm at this time the tribute which it felt moved to pay to the Hands of the Cause of God at the World Congress, those precious souls who have brought the Cause safely to victory in the name of Shoghi Effendi. We wish also to remember the devoted work of their Auxiliary Board members, as well as the services of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, of the army of pioneers, the members of the national and regional spiritual assemblies, the services and prayers and sacrifices of the believers everywhere, all of which in the sum total have attracted such bounties and favors from Bahá'u'lláh.

The Universal House of Justice, in several sessions held in the Holy Land and in London, has been able to initiate its work and to make arrangements for the establishment of the institution in Haifa. It has no officers and henceforth its communications to the Bahá'í world will be signed UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE over an embossed seal.

The Cause of God, launched on the sea of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has achieved, under the superb leadership of its beloved Guardian, a spread throughout the world and a momentum which must now carry it forward on the next stage of its world-redeeming mission, the second epoch of the Divine Plan. The Universal House of Justice, in close consultation with the Hands of the Cause, is examining the vast range of Bahá'í activity and growth in order to prepare a detailed plan of expansion for the whole Bahá'í community, to be launched at Ridván 1964. But there are some objectives to be achieved at once.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

The consolidation of the goals and new communities of the Bahá'í world is an urgent and immediate task facing the fifty-six national spiritual assemblies, and an essential preparation for the launching of the new plans. Pioneers must be maintained at their posts and all the local spiritual assemblies strengthened through a firm establishment of Bahá'í community life and an active teaching program. Those national spiritual assemblies which rest on the basis of a small number of local spiritual assemblies must make great efforts to insure that this number will be increased at Ridván 1964. Pioneers ready to go to consolidation areas, as well as those eager to open new territories, should make their offers through their national spiritual assembly.

The great work of teaching must be extended, not only in those areas where mass conversion is beginning, but everywhere. The high intensity of teaching activity reached at the end of the World Crusade, far from slackening, must now be increased as the friends everywhere draw on the vast spiritual powers released as a result of the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee and the emergence of the Universal House of Justice.

The Ten Year Crusade witnessed the completion of the structure of the Mother Temple of Europe. It is now imperative to complete, without delay, the interior decoration, to install utilities and lay access roads, to landscape grounds, and to construct the caretaker's house. This work will cost not less than $210,000, but if delayed it will cost considerably more. The House of Justice calls upon the national spiritual assemblies to allocate substantial budgets for the immediate completion of this work.

PROJECTS TO BE EMBARKED UPON

The plan to be embarked upon next Ridván, the details of which will be announced during the coming year, will include such projects as the extension and embellishment of the endowments at the World Center; collation of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi; continual reinforcement of the ties binding the Bahá'í world to the United Nations; formation of many more national spiritual assemblies, both by division of existing regional spiritual assemblies and the development of new Bahá'í communities, together with the purchase of national Hazíratu'l-Quds, Temple sites, and national endowments; the opening of new territories to the Faith; detailed plans for national spiritual assemblies involving, in some areas, consolidation goals, in others the multiplication of Bahá'í institutes and schools, in others a great enrichment of Bahá'í literature, and in all a vast increase in the number of Bahá'ís, and the holding of oceanic and intercontinental conferences.

All such expansion and development of the Faith will be dependent upon the Bahá'í Fund. The Universal House of Justice calls the attention of every believer to this vital and pressing matter, and asks the national spiritual assemblies to pay special attention to the principle of universal participation, so that every single follower of Bahá'u'lláh may make his offering, however small or great, and thereby identify himself with the work of the Cause everywhere. It is our hope that a constant flow of contributions to the International Fund will make it possible to build up sufficient reserves for the launching of the new plan in 1964.

Beloved friends, we enter the second epoch of the Divine Plan blessed beyond compare, riding the crest of a great wave of victory produced for us by our beloved Guardian. The Cause of God is now firmly rooted in the world. Forward then, confident in the power and protection of the Lord of Hosts, Who will, through storm and trial, toil and jubilee, use His devoted followers to bring to a despairing humanity the life-giving waters of His supreme Revelation.

May 7, 1963 — (London)

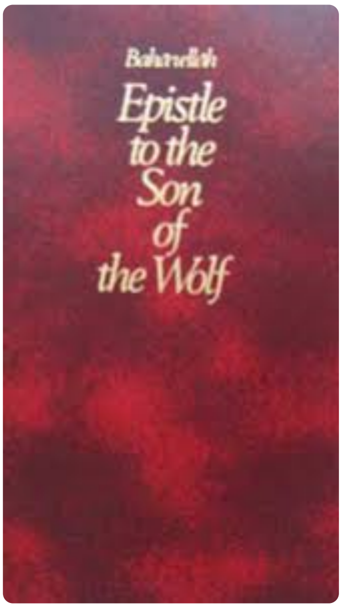
Comments

Original Index: 1528 | Current Position: 47

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1940, A LETTER FROM SHOGHI EFFENDI NOTED A NEW TRANSLATION OF "EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF", NOTING SUCH CHANGES AS "'FEAR OF GOD' HAS APPARENTLY BEEN DELIBERATELY CHANGED IN SOME CASES INTO 'LOVE OF GOD'."

May 7. On this date in 1940, a letter from Shoghi Effendi noted a new translation of *Epistle To the Son of the Wolf*, noting such changes as " 'Fear of God' has apparently been deliberately changed in some cases into 'Love of God'."

A careful comparison of this new translation of the Guardian with that of Mrs. Chanler's clearly reveals how inadequate and misleading the latter is both from the point of view of accuracy and of faithfulness. It further shows how unconscientious Ahmad Sohrab has been in comparing that old translation with the original Persian and Arabic text of the Tablet. His description in the preface of the book of Mrs. Chanler's rendering as 'accurate' and 'faithful' is altogether untrue, as not only her translation abounds with mistakes, but also reveals many important omissions. The term 'Fear of God' has apparently been deliberately changed in some cases into 'Love of God' towards the end of the book, as the French version which she translated proves (it).



Comments

Original Index: 1529 | Current Position: 48

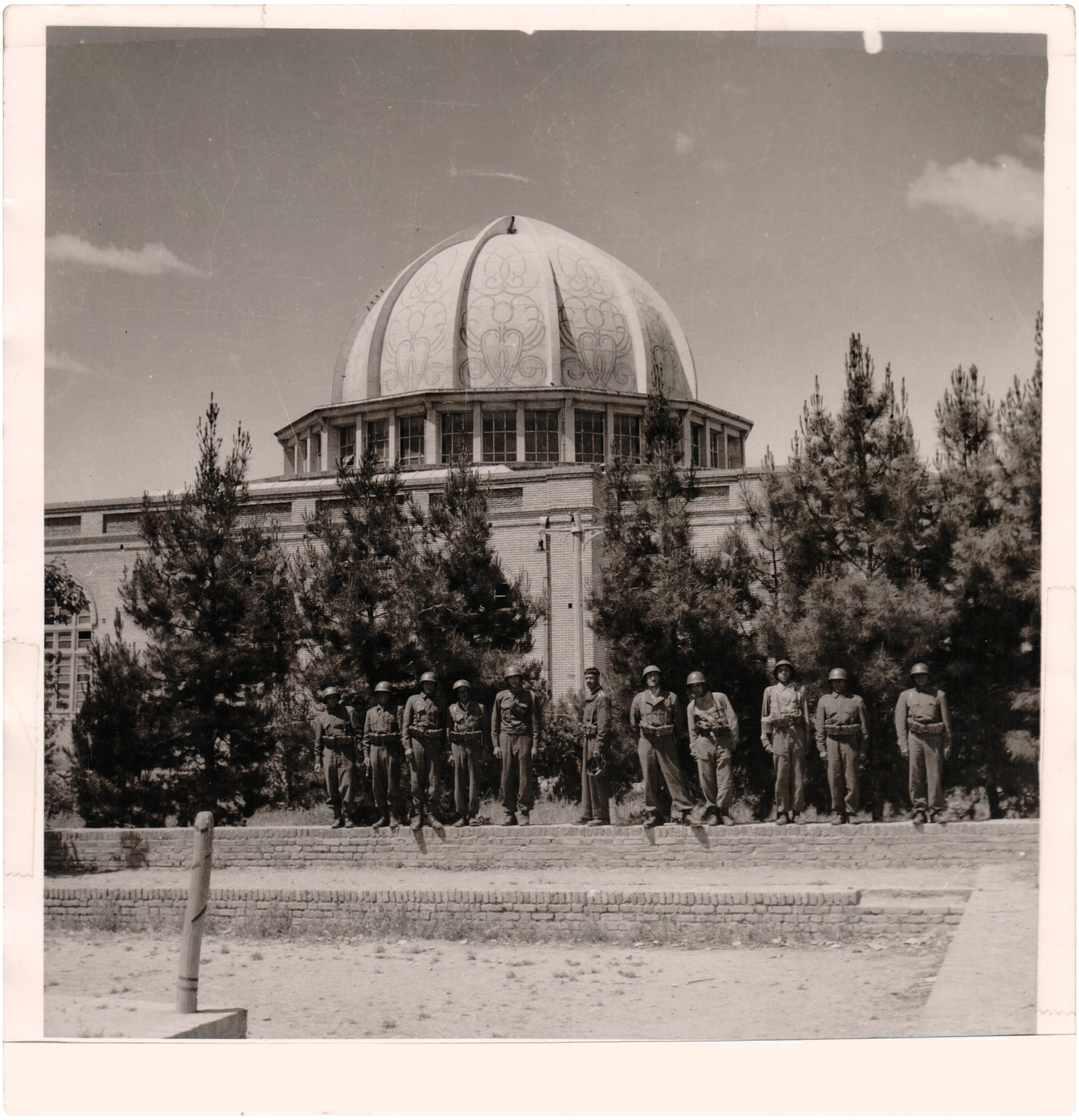
MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI SENT A FRAGMENT OF THE PLASTER FROM THE ROOM OF THE BÁB IN THE FORTRESS OF MAKU TO AUSTRALIA TO BE SET IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR.

May 7. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi sent a fragment of the plaster from the room of the Báb in the Fortress of Maku to Australia to be set in the foundations of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Comments

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, THE IRANIAN ARMY OCCUPIED THE NATIONAL BAHÁ’Í CENTRE IN TEHRAN.

May 7. On this date in 1955, the Iranian army occupied the National Bahá’í Centre in Tehran.



Comments

Original Index: 1531 | Current Position: 50

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 2016, JENABE ESSLEMONT CALDWELL DIED IN WAILUKU, HAWAII. BORN ON AUGUST 7, 1926 IN BUTTE, MONTANA, HE AND HIS WIFE ELAINE WERE NAMED KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR PIONEERING TO THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS IN JULY, 1953

May 7. On this date in 2016, Jenabe Esslemont Caldwell died in Wailuku, Hawaii. Born on August 7, 1926 in Butte, Montana, he and his wife Elaine were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to the Aleutian Islands in July, 1953 where they started a king crab and salmon cannery. They sponsored the Bahá'í singing group Windflower that toured Europe, including the United Kingdom, in the 1980s. He authored several books.

Comments

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1973, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER "TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE WORLD" PUBLICLY ANNOUNCING THE CONVERSION OF MALIETOA TANUMAFILI II TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH, BECOMING TO THE FIRST HEAD OF STATE AND REIGNING CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCH TO DO SO.

May 7. On this date in 1973, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "to the Bahá'ís of the World" publicly announcing the conversion of Malietoa Tanumafili II to the Bahá'í Faith, becoming to the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to do so.

The Universal House of Justice

7 May 1973

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

It is now possible to share with you all the news of an event which crowns the victories with which Bahá'u'lláh has blessed His followers during the Nine Year Plan, an event of which the true significance will be fully understood only in the course of centuries to come: a reigning monarch has accepted the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Among those to whom *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* was presented in 1967 was His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, the Head of State of the independent nation of Western Samoa in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. His Highness, who had already heard of the Faith, showed immediately that the sacred Words had touched his heart, and the Universal House of Justice thereupon asked the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, who had presented the book to him, to return to Western Samoa for further audiences with His Highness. Following this visit the Malietoa conveyed his acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to the Universal House of Justice and became the first reigning sovereign to enter beneath the shade of this Cause.

His Highness decided, with the full agreement of the Universal House of Justice, that it was not propitious to make his declaration public at that time. He has been visited from time to time by Hands of the Cause and other believers, and continual touch with His

Highness has been maintained by the House of Justice through Mr. Suhayl 'Alá'í, a member of the Continental Board of Counselors for Australasia. Gradually the Malietoa has let it be known to those around him that he has accepted Bahá'u'lláh. Now he has judged the time ripe to share this wondrous news with his fellow-believers in all parts of the world, by addressing to the International Bahá'í Convention the gracious and inspiring message of which a copy is enclosed with this letter.…

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

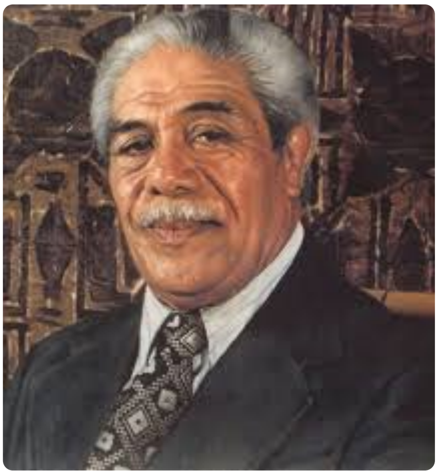
For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

Interestingly, while Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim:

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.



Comments

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1980, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF GERMANY IN RESPONSE TO THEIR LETTER CONCERNING A NEWSPAPER'S PUBLISHING A LETTER FROM SWISS EX-BAHÁ'Í FRANCESCO FICICCHIA. IN 1995 UDO SCHAEFER AUTHORED "DESINFORMATION ALS METHODE" AS A REFUTATION TO FICICCHIA'S "DER BAHÁ'ISMUS"

May 7. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote the NSA of Germany in response to their letter concerning a newspaper's publishing a letter from Swiss ex-Bahá'í Francesco Ficicchia. In 1995 Udo Schaefer, German Bahá'í author and lawyer who served on the NSA of Germany, authored *Desinformation als Methode* as a refutation to Francesco Ficicchia's *Der Bahá'ismus — Weltreligion der Zukunft?*. Although *Der Bahá'ismus* was never translated into English, Schaefer's *Desinformation als Methode* was published in 2001 in English as *Making the Crooked Straight*, which was reviewed by Denis MacEoin.

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

7 May 1980

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 14 April 1980 enclosing the copy of that part of page 15 of the issue of the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung for 14 March 1980, on which the letter from Francesco Ficicchia was published.

The House of Justice feels that the best course is to ignore this disgraceful attack on the Faith, rather than to make any rebuttal. Your Assembly should, however, be prepared to answer any enquiries that you may receive as a result of this article, whether from Bahá'ís or non-Bahá'ís. To assist you in this, we enclose extracts from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, which touch on matters raised by Mr. Ficicchia. You are also, no doubt, aware that a Russian translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas by A. G. Tumansky was published in 1899. A translation of the complete text into English, made by two former Presbyterian missionaries in Iran, was published by The Royal Asiatic Society in 1961; it is accompanied by highly prejudiced and misleading footnotes and introduction, and the inadequacy of the translation itself is immediately apparent to anyone who compares passages with those that Shoghi Effendi translated. The exisence of these two published translations, however, demonstrates the falsity of Ficicchia's statement that no complete translation exists. A far clearer understanding of the contents of the Most Holy Book, however, than given by either translation, is presented in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas which gives not only the laws of the Aqdas themselves, but also includes the elucidations given by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the "Questions and Answers," and contains many explanatory annotation provided by the House of Justice.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

27 May 1980

Extracts from a reply written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to questions about the Kitáb-i-Aqdas

The institution of the Covenant has a direct bearing on the implementation of the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. This Book is the repository of the basic laws for the Dispensation to be implemented gradually in accordance with the guidance given by God through those infallible Institutions which lie at the heart of the Covenant. Indeed, one of those Institutions, the Universal House of Justice, has been given by Bahá'u'lláh the task not only of applying the laws but of supplementing them and of making laws on all matters not explicitly covered in the Sacred Text. An English translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was made by Dr. Earl E. Elder and Dr. William McE. Miller, two men who were Presbyterian missionaries in Persia and have long been strongly antagonistic to the Faith. A great many of the statements that they make about its history are based on the assertions of Covenant-breakers or opponents of the Faith—rather like a history of Christianity based primarily on statements by enemies of Jesus Christ. Dr. Miller, for example, places great reliance on a document called the "Nuqṭatu'l-Káf," which is, in fact, spurious, as is fully demonstrated by the Hand of the Cause Ḥasan Balyúzí in his book Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith.

The reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are given in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself is the kernel of a vast structure of Bahá'í law that will have to come into being in the years and centuries ahead as the unity of mankind is established and develops. Thus to properly understand the contents of that Book one should also read many other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh relating to them, as well as the interpretations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Guardian, and realize that great areas of detail have been left by Bahá’u’lláh for the Universal House of Justice to fill in and to vary in accordance with the needs of a developing society. For example:

1 The law of divorce in the Aqdas seems to apply only to a husband divorcing his wife, and not vice versa. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Guardian have made it quite clear that the principle enunciated by Bahá’u’lláh in the “Kitáb-i-Aqdas” applies equally to men and women, and the law has always been implemented in this way. Such elucidations are one of the specific functions intended by Bahá’u’lláh for the authoritative Interpreter.

2 The Kitáb-i-Aqdas appears to allow bigamy. This is explained in Note 17 on page 59 of the Synopsis and Codification: “The text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas upholds monogamy, but as it appears also to permit bigamy, the Guardian was asked for a clarification, and in reply his secretary wrote on his behalf: ‘Regarding Bahá’í marriage: in the light of the Master’s Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practiced.’”

This is an authoritative interpretation, and as an interpretation states what is intended by the original text, it is correct to say that the Kitáb-i-Aqdas prohibits plurality of wives. This method of establishing monogamy as the law of the Faith is one example of the process referred to in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification whereby there is a progressive disclosure of the full meaning of the laws of the Faith as the Dispensation unfolds.

3 The punishments prescribed for theft, murder and arson are given only in barest outline. It is explained in Note 42 on page 64 of the Synopsis and Codification that these punishments are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice. The punishment for theft, for example, says that for the third offense a mark must be placed on the thief’s forehead (nothing is said about branding), so that people will be warned of his proclivities. All details of how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Bahá’u’lláh for the Universal House of Justice to decide when the law has to be applied. Similarly, merely the fundamental principles of the punishments for murder and arson are given in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Willful murder is to be punished either by capital punishment

or life imprisonment. Such matters as degrees of offense and whether any extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of prevailing conditions when the law is in operation. Arson, as you yourself can see from the newspapers, is becoming an increasingly frequent offense—scarcely a day passes without some building being burned or blown up, often causing agonizing death to innocent people. Bahá'u'lláh prescribes that a person who burns a house intentionally is to be burned or imprisoned for life, but again, the application of these punishments, the method of carrying them out and the fixing of degrees of offense are left to the Universal House of Justice. Obviously there is a tremendous difference in the degree of the offense of a person who burns down an empty warehouse from that of one who sets fire to a school full of children.

From the above examples it should be clear why a translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas made without proper comprehensive footnotes referring to other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh which elucidate His laws as well as to interpretations made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, can give a very misleading impression—quite apart from the problem of achieving a beauty of style in the English which can approach that of the original, an aspect in which the Elder-Miller translation falls woefully short.

Although there is no explicit reference to the Guardianship in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Synopsis and Codification lists "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship." On page 214 of God Passes By, when summarizing the contents of the Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that in it Bahá'u'lláh "anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship," and again, on page 147 of The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh the Guardian refers to "the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship." One such implication is in the matter of Ḥuqúqu'lláh (The Right of God), which is ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas without provision being made for who is to receive it; in His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá fills this gap by stating "It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God …" Other implications of this institution can be seen in the terms in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá is appointed as the Successor of Bahá'u'lláh and the Interpreter of His Teachings. The faithful are enjoined to turn their faces towards the one whom "God hath purposed" and who "hath branched from this Ancient Root" and are bidden to refer whatsoever they do not understand in the Bahá'í writings to him who "hath branched from this mighty Stock." Yet another can be seen in the provision of the Aqdas concerning the disposition of international endowments—a passage which not only refers this matter to the Aghṣán (male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh) but also provides for what should happen should the line of Aghṣán end before the coming into being of the Universal House of Justice. Thus the "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship" is correctly included in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

UDO SCHAEFER
NICOLA TOWFIGH
ULRICH GOLLMER
Desinformation als Methode
DIE BAHÁ'ISMUS-MONOGRAPHIE DES F. FICICCHIA
OLMS

Comments

MAY 7. ON THIS DATE IN 1976, SAICHIRO FUJITA, THE SECOND JAPANESE TO BECOME A BAHÁ'Í, DIED IN HAIFA, ISRAEL.

May 7. On this date in 1976, Saichiro Fujita, the second Japanese to become a Bahá'í, died in Haifa, Israel.

Sachiro Fujita was born in Yanai, Japan, on April 15, 1886.

He went to the United States when he was a teenager as he wanted to complete his education there. While he was attending school in Oakland, California in 1905 he was taught the Faith by Kathryn Frankland who also helped to teach Kanichi Yamamoto and his children.

Sachiro Fujita converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1905. The American Bahá'ís had trouble pronouncing Fujita's name so while there he took the first name, Harriston, but that was eventually dropped.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá made his trip to America, Fujita met him in Cleveland, where he was working for a Bahá'í doctor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited Fujita to travel with him, so Fujita joined the group. Fujita would accompany ‘Abdu'l-Bahá across many American cities including Kenosha, Wisconsin, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, Denver and Glenwood Springs, Colorado, Salt Lake City, Utah, and San Francisco and Stanford, California.

Fujita expressed the desire to go to Palestine with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and spend the rest of his life serving him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá accepted Fujita's offer but for the next seven years guided Fujita's studies in the United States for the special services that he would do for him. In 1919 Fujita left for Palestine and stayed there until 1938. He helped in many ways: maintaining 'Abdu'l-Bahá's car; installing electric wiring; gardening; and serving pilgrims.

Perhaps one of his greatest services was after the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921, when Shoghi Effendi left for rest and relaxation in the Bernese Oberland with his cousin Ruhi Afnan. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, Bahiyyih Khanum, took over the affairs of the Faith until Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa to assume his duties as Guardian of the Faith. As Fujita's English was fluent, he wrote letters at the direction of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

In 1938, Shoghi Effendi sent to Sachiro Fujita to live with his family in Yamaguchi Prefecture. This happened around the same time that Shoghi Effendi disbanded the Haifa

Spiritual Assembly and sent the small Palestinian Bahá'í community, all of them Persians, to leave the territory of Mandatory Palestine and move to Iran.

In 1955, Shoghi Effendi permitted Fujita to return to what had become Israel, where he would continue to work under the Custodians and the Universal House of Justice until his death on May 7, 1976.

Comments

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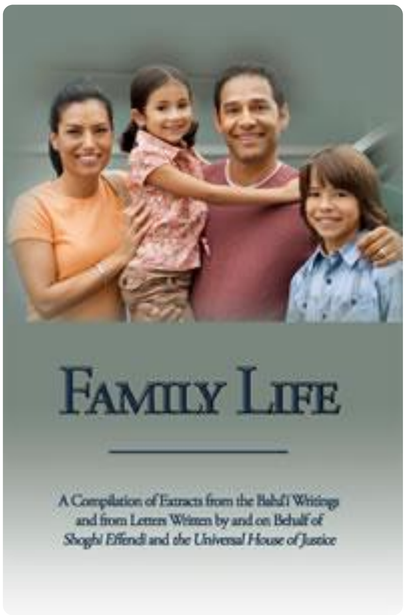
MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1942, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "DEEP AS ARE FAMILY TIES, WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THE SPIRITUAL TIES ARE FAR DEEPER; THEY ARE EVERLASTING AND SURVIVE DEATH, WHEREAS PHYSICAL TIES, UNLESS SUPPORTED BY SPIRITUAL BONDS, ARE CONFINED TO THIS LIFE."

May 8. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Deep as are family ties, we must always remember that the spiritual ties are far deeper; they are everlasting and survive death, whereas physical ties, unless supported by spiritual bonds, are confined to this life."

729. Family Ties

"Deep as are family ties, we must always remember that the spiritual ties are far deeper; they are everlasting and survive death, whereas physical ties, unless supported by spiritual bonds, are confined to this life. You should do all in your power, through prayer and example, to open the eyes of your family to the Bahá'í Faith, but do not grieve too much over their actions. Turn to your Bahá'í brothers and sisters who are living with you in the light of the Kingdom."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 8, 1942)


FAMILY LIFE
A Compilation of Extracts from the Bahá'í Writings
and from Letters Written by and on Behalf of
Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1942, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THE BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF PEORIA THAT "THE WHOLE WORLD IS SUFFERING, IT IS SUNK IN MISERY, CRUSHED BENEATH ITS HEAVY PROBLEMS. THE TASK OF HEALING ITS ILLS AND BUILDING UP ITS FUTURE DEVOLVES MAINLY UPON THE YOUTH."

May 8. On this date in 1942, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Bahá'í children and youth of Peoria that "The whole world is suffering, it is sunk in misery, crushed beneath its heavy problems. The task of healing its ills and building up its future devolves mainly upon the youth."

2157. The Bahá'í Faith is a Religion that Belongs to the Youth

"If ever it could be said that a religion belonged to the youth, then surely the Bahá'í Faith today is that religion. The whole world is suffering, it is sunk in misery, crushed beneath its heavy problems. The task of healing its ills and building up its future devolves mainly upon the youth. They are the generation who, after the war, will have to solve the terrible difficulties created by the war and all that brought it about. And they will not be able to upbuild the future except by the laws and principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh. So their task is very great and their responsibility very grave."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í children and youth of Peoria, May 8, 1942)

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1996, A BAHÁ'Í ADDRESSED THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE AN EMAIL "REGARDING QUESTIONS RAISED ABOUT THE FULFILMENT OF THE BIBLICAL PROPHECY OF DANIEL CONCERNING 1,335 DAYS, AS WELL AS MODIFICATIONS MADE TO 'BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE NEW ERA.'"

May 8. On this date in 1996, a Bahá'í addressed the Universal House of Justice an email "regarding questions raised about the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecy of Daniel concerning 1,335 days, as well as modifications made to 'Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era.'"

On May 4, 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963."

1414. Predictions of Peace, Prophecy of Daniel--1335 Days

"Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask, namely, 'Blessed is he who cometh unto the thousand three hundred and thirty five days'. These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: From a Tablet to a Kurdish friend: The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 31, Shoghi Effendi and Lady Blomfield)

"...The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963.

"There is one thing of importance for the Bahá'ís to understand; and that is, that this prophecy refers to happenings within the Faith, not occurrences outside the Faith. It refers specifically to the spread of the Faith over the face of the earth. This will be accomplished when the Bahá'í Faith is firmly established in all the virgin areas outlined in the Ten-Year Crusade, and the other goals of the Crusade are completed. Thus it behooves us to work day and night in order to accomplish this glorious goal."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 4, 1946: Some Extracts from Letters written on behalf of the Guardian on the subject of the Prophecy of Daniel: A Compilation from the World Centre to the compiler)

On May 11, 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of religious prophecy of over 3,000 years!"

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"...Sometimes people strive all their lives to render outstanding service. Here is the time and opportunity to render historic services; in fact the most unique in history, aiding in the fulfillment of Daniel's Prophecies of the Last Day, and the 1335 days, when men are to be blessed by the Glory of the Lord, covering the entire globe--which is the real goal of the Ten Year Crusade.

"In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of religious prophecy of over 3,000 years!"

"The pioneers themselves must realize that not only are they fulfilling the wishes of Bahá'u'lláh, and doing that which the Master Himself said He longed to do; namely, to go, if necessary on foot, and carry His Father's Message to all the regions of the earth; but they are enhancing the prestige of the Faith to a remarkable degree in the eyes of the public, and specially in the eyes of the officials. There is no doubt that the rapid forward march of the Faith recently has attracted a far greater measure of attention on the part of the thoughtful people, and people of position in society and in educational fields, than has been the case for almost one hundred years.

"Therefore, each pioneer must feel his responsibility very heavily, and understand that his calling is far above the average service; and his duty to remain at his post a very pressing one indeed."

A reference to this prophecy from Daniel is one of the notable posthumous edits from John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

Prophecy of Daniel; Modifications of Baha'u'llah and the New Era by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1996-06-02 Mr. .... Dear Bahá'í Friend, Your email of 8 May 1996 regarding questions raised about the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecy of Daniel concerning 1,335 days, as well as modifications made to "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", was referred to us for response. In answer to earlier, similar questions on these subjects, memoranda were prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice. Copies of these are enclosed.

It is our hope that these will be helpful to you in responding to the questions which have been raised.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, Department of the Secretariat Enclosures (appended) MEMORANDUM To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 13 December 1990 From: Research Department

DANIEL'S PROPHECIES Revised February 1996 From time to time, questions are raised by the Bahá'ís about the interpretation of the Biblical prophecies contained in the following verses in Daniel 12:11-12: And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

To assist the friends in their study of this subject, the Research Department has prepared a summary of the elucidations contained in the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá and the letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on this theme. Three main issues are addressed: the interpretation of 1,290 days; the interpretation of 1,335 days; and the date of the commencement of the "hundred lunar years", which, as mentioned by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), page 151, will precede the consummation of the 1,335 days. 1. 1,290 Days

In "Some Answered Questions" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), pages 43-44, Abdu'l-Bahá interprets the prophecy concerning the 1,290 days in the following terms:

The beginning of this lunar reckoning is from the day of the proclamation of the prophethood of Muhammad in the country of Hijaz; and that was three years after His mission, because in the beginning the prophethood of Muhammad was kept secret, and no one knew it save Khadijah and Ibn Nawfal. After three years it was announced. And Bahá'u'lláh, in the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muhammad, caused His manifestation to be known. Note that the Master indicates that, in this instance, time is measured by the "lunar" calendar. Since the proclamation of the mission of Muhammad took place ten years prior to the Hegira, i.e., His flight from Mecca to

Medina, from which date the Muslim calendar begins, the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muhammad was the year 1280 of the Hegira, or 1863-64 A.D. There are references to 1,290 days in "God Passes By", on pages 110 and 151. In these passages, Shoghi Effendi confirms that the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, which occurred in 1863 (1280 A.H.), represents the fulfilment of the 1,290 days.

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1. 1,335 Days Two Tablets revealed by Abdu'l-Bahá which are published in "The Passing ofAbdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: 1922), by Lady Blomfield and Shoghi Effendi, provide interpretations of the 1,335 days referred to by Daniel:

Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask, namely, "Blessed is he who cometh unto the thousand three hundred and thirty five days". These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice! (p. 31) O servant of God! The afore mentioned a thousand three hundred and thirty-five years must be reckoned from the day of the flight of His Holiness Muhammad, the Apostle of God, (Hegira) salutations and blessings rest upon Him, at the close of which time the signs of the rise, the glory, the exaltation, the spread of the Word of God throughout the East and the West shall appear. (p. 31)

From these Tablets it appears that: - The spread of the Faith throughout the world will signal the fulfilment of this prophecy. - The "days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years".

- The Tablets suggest that the prophecy is fulfilled by two different dates. The first derives from the centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh; the second is calculated from 622 A.D. -- hence, 1963 and 1957.

Shoghi Effendi associated Daniel's reference to the 1,335 days and Abdu'l-Bahá's statements about this prophecy with the centenary of the formal assumption of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic office and the worldwide triumph of the Bahá'í Cause. He stressed that the prophecy refers to occurrences within the Bahá'í community, rather than to events in the outside world, e.g., the establishment of peace. While the Guardian clearly allied the triumph of the Faith with the successful termination of the third Teaching Plan undertaken by the believers, in his letters and those written on his behalf, three specific dates are mentioned as marking the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. 2.1 1960 -- A lunar reckoning

Concerning the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By", page 151, wrote: Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 3 The "hundred lunar years", destined to immediately precede that blissful consummation (1,335 days), announced by Daniel ... had commenced. One hundred years, by a "lunar reckoning", after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh coincides with 1960. 2.2 1963 -- A solar reckoning

When the world-embracing Spiritual Crusade was announced in October 1952, Shoghi Effendi linked the completion of this decade-long enterprise with the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy:

LET THEM AS THEY ENTER IT VOW ONE VOICE ONE HEART ONE SOUL NEVER TURN BACK ENTIRE COURSE FATEFUL DECADE AHEAD UNTIL EACH EVERY ONE WILL HAVE CONTRIBUTED SHARE LAYING ON WORLD-WIDE SCALE AN UNASSAILABLE ADMINISTRATIVE FOUNDATION FOR BAHA'U'LLAH'S CHRIST-PROMISED KINGDOM ON EARTH SWELLING THEREBY CHORUS UNIVERSAL JUBILATION WHEREIN EARTH HEAVEN WILL JOIN AS PROPHESIED DANIEL ECHOED ABDU'L-BAHA ON THAT DAY WILL FAITHFUL REJOICE WITH EXCEEDING GLADNESS. ("Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 44) Thereafter, the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the 1,335 days is associated with the end of the Ten Year Crusade. For example, in a letter dated 9 February 1953 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a group of Bahá'ís, his secretary wrote: The purpose of the Conferences1 will be the world-wide propagation of the Faith. They will lay the foundations of the service of the Bahá'ís of the world for the great Ten Year Crusade ahead -- which, God willing, will be consummated in the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, and the achievement of the initial goals set byAbdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, whereby the world will be flooded with the Glory of the Lord. And, in a letter dated 11 May 1956 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, we find the following statement:

...when we fulfil the Ten Year Crusade, we will have brought into fulfilment Daniel's great prophecy of "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days".

1. International Conferences scheduled to take place during 1953.

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2.3 1957 There are several references in letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi which give 1957 as the date of the fulfilment of the prophecy. For example:

It is far too early to make any predictions about peace of any sort, judging by the ebullitions of the world's affairs these days! Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Tablets, connects the prophecy of Daniel -- 1957 -- with the proclamation and spread of the Cause. (31 July 1946 to an individual believer) It is interesting to note that, when a National Spiritual Assembly sought clarification from the beloved Guardian about whether the 1,335 days culminate in 1957 or in 1963, Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated 30 June 1952 written on his behalf indicated: Regarding the prophecy of Daniel: ... this prophecy refers to the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in the Garden of Ridvan, Baghdad. Reference to this can be found in "The Passing ofAbdu'l-Bahá" in quotations from two of His Tablets. (30 June 1952) 2.4 The Calculation of the Date A number of believers requested guidance from Shoghi Effendi about how to calculate the date that will coincide with the fulfilment of the 1,335 days. We provide two responses written on behalf of the Guardian:

The 1335 days referred to by Daniel will be fulfilled in 1963. The date of the Hijra is 622 A.D. The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963. There is one thing of importance for the Bahá'ís to understand; and that is, that this prophecy refers to happenings within the Faith, not occurrences outside the Faith. It refers specifically to the spread of the Faith over the face of the earth. This will be accomplished when the Bahá'í Faith is firmly established in all of the virgin areas outlined in the Ten Year Crusade, and the other goals of the Crusade are completed. Thus it behoves us to work day and night in order to accomplish this glorious goal. (18 December 1953 to an individual believer)

As regards your question concerning the date 1335: The reckoning of this date does not bring it to the exact date of 1963, but a few more years. Nevertheless, there is no conflict in this,

Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 5 because `Abdu'l-Bahá says that it will be the beginning of the diffusion of the Light of the Faith in the east and the west. This will already have begun to come about before 1963, which is the fulfilment of the 100 years from Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration.

(31 January 1955 to an individual believer) It is noteworthy that insufficient information is provided in the first extract to permit a precise calculation, while in the second, the Guardian's secretary indicates that a calculation would not give "the exact date of 1963, but a few more years". The Research Department has not been able to locate any additional authoritative texts which contain detailed instructions concerning how to make the calculation. 3. The "Hundred Lunar Years"

In "God Passes By", page 151, Shoghi Effendi allies the "hundred lunar " years after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh with the fulfilment of the 1,335 days of Daniel's prophecy. The only other reference to one hundred "lunar" years that the Research Department has, so far, been able to find, is contained in a letter dated 31 October 1947 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly. This letter clarifies the mistaken assumption that the year 1335 relates to the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's mystic experience in the Siyah-Chal (i.e., 1952-1953):

He wishes me to point out that this is inaccurate as on page 151 of "God Passes By", in the references to His Declaration, the Guardian clearly states that with this Declaration the "hundred lunar years" ... had commenced'. The mystic experience of Bahá'u'lláh was in the Siyah- Chal and has nothing to do with Daniel's prophecy. This statement of the Guardian is itself based on extracts from two of the Master's Tablets which are published in "The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá".

In addition, a believer asked Shoghi Effendi about the relationship between the establishment of peace and the fulfilment of the prophecy about the 1,335 days and requested the source of, a reference to, and the starting date of, a prophecy concerning the "one hundred years after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh" referred to in a pilgrim's notes. The Guardian in a letter dated 1 April 1946 written on his behalf made the following response: Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel does not definitely connect it with either the

Lesser or the Most Great Peace, but rather with a great step forward on the part of humanity and the Bahá'í Faith. All we know is that the Lesser and the Most Great Peace will come -- their exact dates we do not know. The 100 years is from 1853; the Master explains this in some of His Tablets, and is quoted in "The Passing ofAbdu'l-Bahá".

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Both of the letters cited above base their conclusions on the same two Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá, which are quoted in section 2 of this memorandum. Since the beloved Guardian rules out a relationship between Daniel's prophecy and the intimation of the coming of revelation to Bahá'u'lláh, it is evident that some other explanation must be found for the significance of the one- hundred-year period that begins in 1853. 4. Concluding Remarks

While it is clear that the prophecy concerning the 1,335 days is associated with the spread of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world, several different dates are given in our authoritative texts for the actual fulfilment of this prophecy. As mentioned earlier, the two Tablets of the Master which are cited in "The Passing of `Abdu'l-Bahá", page 31, suggest different dates for the fulfilment of the prophecy of the 1,335 days: 1963 and 1957. Further, in the letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian indicates that these same Tablets form the basis for his interpretation of the date of the fulfilment of the 1,335 days referred to in Daniel. Three different dates are either given by the Guardian or can be inferred from these same Tablets -- 1957, 1960, and 1963.

In addition, these same Tablets are also given as the reference for the one-hundred-year period that began in 1853.

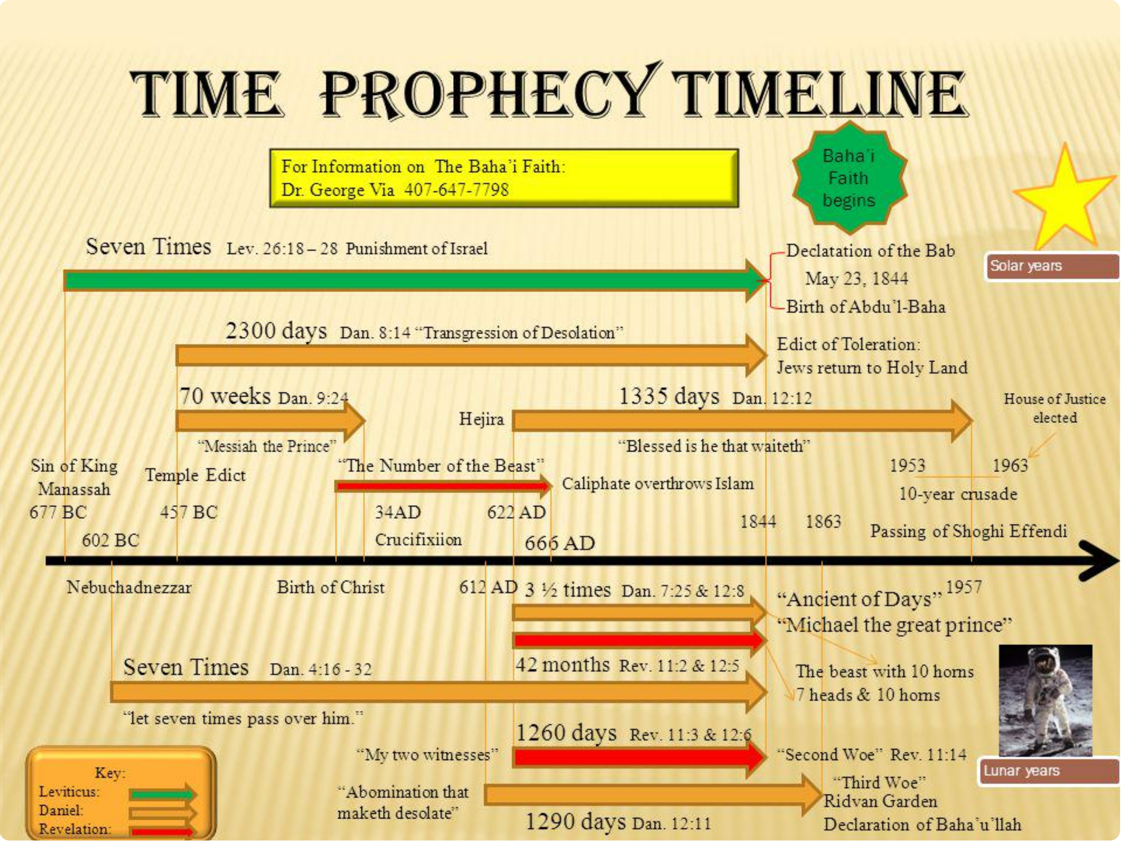
In light of the foregoing, it is, therefore, suggested that:

- The prophecy of Daniel about the 1,335 days is not fulfilled by just one single date. Its fulfilment is, rather, a process that extends over a period of time.
- The fulfilment of the prophecy coincides with the period of the Ten Year Crusade, 1953-1963, a span of time that includes 1953 (the end of the hundred years whose significance is unclear), 1957, 1960, and 1963.

It is interesting to note that Shoghi Effendi described the Ten Year Crusade as the "ninth part" of that "majestic process, set in motion at the dawn of the Adamic cycle" by means of which the "light" of God's Revelation will be diffused in both the Eastern and Western

Hemispheres, through the operation of a decade-long world spiritual crusade whose termination will, God willing, coincide with the Most Great Jubilee commemorating the Centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. (30 April 1953 to the All-America Intercontinental Teaching Conference, published in "Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 155) Daniel's Prophecies Revised February 1996 Page 7

Furthermore, the Guardian in a letter dated 7 March 1955 written on his behalf to an individual believer states: Thus in the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe. What a great privilege it is that individuals such as we are, have an opportunity to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade, are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy.


TIME PROPHECY TIMELINE
For Information on The Baha'i Faith:
Dr. George Via 407-647-7798
Baha'i Faith begins
Solar years
Seven Times Lev. 26:18 – 28 Punishment of Israel
Declatation of the Bab
May 23, 1844
Birth of Abdu'l-Baha
2300 days Dan. 8:14 "Transgression of Desolation"
Edict of Toleration:
Jews return to Holy Land
70 weeks Dan. 9:24
"Messiah the Prince"
Hejira
1335 days Dan. 12:12
"Blessed is he that waiteth"
House of Justice elected
Sin of King Manassah
677 BC
Temple Edict
457 BC
"The Number of the Beast"
Caliphate overthrows Islam
34AD
Crucifixiion
622 AD
666 AD
1844
1863
1953
1963
10-year crusade
Passing of Shoghi Effendi
602 BC
Nebuchadnezzar
Birth of Christ
612 AD
3 ½ times Dan. 7:25 & 12:8
"Ancient of Days"
1957
"Michael the great prince"
Seven Times Dan. 4:16 - 32
"let seven times pass over him."
42 months Rev. 11:2 & 12:5
The beast with 10 horns
7 heads & 10 horns
1260 days Rev. 11:3 & 12:6
"My two witnesses"
"Second Woe" Rev. 11:14
Lunar years
"Third Woe"
Ridvan Garden
Declaration of Baha'u'llah
"Abomination that maketh desolate"
1290 days Dan. 12:11
Key:
Leviticus:
Daniel:
Revelation:

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1937, SHOGHI EFFENDI SAID "NATIONALISM AND MILITARISM ARE ALL INSTRUMENTS WHICH GOD IS UTILIZING FOR THE USE OF HIS PURPOSE. THIS TURMOIL IS A PREPARATION. THE COMING WAR WILL WELD THE NATIONS INTO A KINGDOM OF GOD. THE BAHÁ'ÍS ARE PREPARING THE WAY AT PRESENT FOR THIS..."

May 8. On this date in 1937, Shoghi Effendi said "Nationalism and militarism are all instruments which God is utilizing for the use of His purpose. This turmoil is a preparation. The coming war will weld the nations into a Kingdom of God. The Bahá'ís are preparing the way at present for this great fusion. Eventually they will all be united."

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1902, WILLIAM SUTHERLAND MAXWELL WED MAY ELLIS BOLLES IN LONDON. THEY MET WHILE WILLIAM WAS STUDYING ARCHITECTURE IN PARIS AND MAY WAS THE SISTER OF ONE OF HIS CLASSMATES. THE COUPLE HOSTED 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN THEIR MONTREAL AND WERE THE PARENTS OF MARY SUTHERLAND MAXWELL ...

May 8. On this date in 1902, William Sutherland Maxwell wed May Ellis Bolles in London. They met while William was studying architecture in Paris and May was the sister of one of his classmates. The couple hosted 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their Montreal and were the parents of Mary Sutherland Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.

It was at this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave his talk discussing his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America:

Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.**

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose.

For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest.**

If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1976, AMELIA BOWMAN DIED. AN AMERICAN WHO PIONEERED TO SCANDINAVIA, DURING A PILGRIMAGE TO HAIFA SHE "ASKED ABOUT PAKISTAN AND THE GUARDIAN EXPLAINED THAT THOUGH MOSLEM - THIS IS NO DOUBT TEMPORARY AND WILL BE ABSORBED LATER BY THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA."

May 8. On this date in 1976, Amelia Bowman died. An American who pioneered to Scandinavia, during a pilgrimage to Haifa she "asked about Pakistan and the Guardian explained that though Moslem - this is no doubt temporary and will be absorbed later by the Republic of India."

The following is a machine translation of Amelia Bowman's obituary posted on the webpage of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Norway (Nasjonalt Åndelig Råd for Bahá'íer i Norge)....

Amelia Bowman died on Saturday, May 8, 1976 at Stokka Nursing Home in Stavanger. She was 78 years old. Few American pioneers can look back on such a long and continuous pioneer time that Amelia can. She spent 29 years as a pioneer in Europe, of which 25 years for the Bahá'í Faith spread in Norway. But she also had a long and versatile experience in the service of Faith before she left as a pioneer. She was born in Montana, but as an active Bahá'í, from 1933, she came to live many other places in the United States. For a short time she lived in Boston, and in 1935 she was a member of the Eliot, Maine Education Committee. From there she traveled to New Hampshire along with Martha L. Root and her husband, Harold Bowman. In the years that followed, she supported the teaching of the Green Acre summer school in the United States.

When World War II broke out in Europe in 1939, Shoghi Effendi initiated his first seven-year curriculum. It would last until 1946, because then the war in Europe would be over. The curriculum included no less than the entire American continent, and was, of course, a major challenge, first and foremost for all Bahá'ís in the United States. For six years, Amelia was a member of the National Teaching Committee, and worked full day as assistant to the committee's secretary, Miss Charlotte Linfoot.

The World War finally ended in Europe, and Shoghi Effendi was able to advance the Divine Plan of Abdu'l-Bahá with his second seven-year plan: "Baha'u'llah's battalion occupied" on this hard-tested continent , and "landed on the shores of Europe". A total of 10 countries were covered by this plan, and Amelia chose Sweden. She came to Stockholm in October 1947 as the 35th American pioneer in Europe. Already in the spring of 1948, she was assisted by, among others, Dorothy Baker, whom Shoghi Effendi years later designated as one of the Cause's first hands. After the first local spiritual council was formed in Stockholm, Amelia traveled to Gothenburg where she allowed the conditions for the formation of Local Spiritual Council also.

However, some of the pioneers had found it difficult to continue their work in post-war Europe and had traveled back to the United States. In order to achieve the goals of the second seven-year plan, it was necessary to move the remaining pioneers to places where they were most needed, and Norway's first pioneers: Millie and George Clark were asked to travel to Amsterdam. Amelia Bowman was asked to travel to Oslo. It was late autumn 1949, and she stayed here for three years. From the first day she had contact with Johanna Schubarth. No matter how different they were to these two older bahamas, one felt strongly that they had something in common; it was this great devotion to faith; This burning desire to do the best they could to earn Bahá'u'llah. One understood as a newcomer that one had a long way to go before one came where the two had come in spiritual growth. In these three years in Oslo, Amelia showed what kind of fire she was. She understood immediately that she had come to a war-torn country in Europe to teach the Faith, and her care and helpfulness were outstanding. Many, many were those who got their mouths saturated at her table, and many were those who left her hospitable home with something under her arm or in her pocket. But besides the great consideration she showed all those she met, she realized that the message she had to give to humans was much more important than the material help she gave them.

Her curriculum was ready, she formed permanent groups and classes, often two a day if it looked the same for those interested. In addition to this, she received many assignments from the National Spiritual Council for the United States. At the annual conferences or summer schools in Europe at that time she was always found either as a speaker or as a reporter. When Dr. Ralph Bunch was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for his work on ceasefire agreements in the Middle East, on that occasion, she represented both the National Spiritual of the Bahá'í in the United States and the International Bahá'í recognized by the United Nations. She personally handed him the thank-you addresses, which Dr. Burch appreciated. Despite his many assignments, Amelia also had time to do outreach activities. She visited housewives, the Esperanto League and the International

Friendly. From the latter institution, we got three contacts stitching all declared themselves as Baha'is.

Amelia had a background as a journalist and is remembered from the earlier time as a reference at the teaching conferences of the time. She learned with great diligence a language, which may be called "Scandinavian", when she had lived in Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi announced that the time had come to initiate extended education. Until now, the teaching work had been dropped to the capitals of the different countries, but hereafter the teaching went over to the regional level. In the summer of 1952, Amelia traveled to Bergen to form a local spiritual council there. There were eventually many and great changes to her, and she was happy the day she received a pilgrimage to Haifa. The conversations she had there with Shoghi Effendi and Ruhyyih Khanum became part of her and she often reprimanded them for us. She had laid both the first and the second seven-year curriculum behind her, and inspired by her stay in Haifa in the spring of 1953 she could embark on the goals of the 10-year chorus. She continued her work in Bergen, where she formed the Local Spiritual Council in 1955. The following year, the first regional spiritual council for Scandinavia-Finland was formed, and she was elected as a member of this council. But even though it required a lot from her to be a member of committees and councils, Amelia never forgot her work as a pioneer. From Bergen, she therefore traveled to Stavanger to form the Local Spiritual Council there.

Large dark clouds were, however, in the uprising of the Bahá'í ?? in the sky of the era, clouds that would prove to be swept away only by the most burning souls. Amelia was one of those souls. The cruel persecutions that, on the part of the opponents, were directed at Baha'i in Persia finally took place, but not without their deep traces. These persecutions, along with attacks by the pacts, shortened the life of Shoghi Effendi and the following year, Bahá ?? i-Faith and friends all over the world without the protector they loved so deeply. In the critical time following Shoghi Effendi's death, it became necessary to send the most experienced pioneers to the countries most severely affected by his demise. Again, the election fell on Amelia, and she was asked to travel to France, where she worked for two years for the implementation of the national curriculum. When the National Spiritual Council of France was formed in 1958, she became a member of the National Education Committee there. It was not only this willing by Amelia that made her send from place to place; It was also this that she always completed her assignments, wherever she was sent.

Amelia's help to Denmark was among other things. of an administrative nature. When Denmark in its time was to acquire a Bahá'í center, it was Amelia, which helped out of currency difficulties. As a US citizen, she could sign for the $ 1,000 from the American Education Committee, which at that time was a lot of money, and even came from Norway to do so. She stayed in Denmark for 6 weeks and helped with the house purchase. She was therefore proud and happy when a moving party was held in the Bahá'í center on August 1, 1955. Inger Hjelme says: "We owned the house, a painted wooden bench, a gas appliance for cooking, a water boiler and some gray cups, that was it We rented some timber tables, which were covered with white machine paper, candles (the power was not yet connected) and lots of roses, and then we made tea in the big beautiful pottery jug that Amelia had given to the center on the occasion of the day. was typical of Amelia, who always made sure to give us the most necessary, both spiritual and material. "

In 1959, she was asked to return to Stavanger, where she with assistance, among other things. by Modesta Hvide, Norway's first helper council member, was able to form Local Spiritual Council the following year. With the help of pioneers, both from Norway, Persia and the United States, in 1962 she had the pleasure of seeing the 4th local spiritual council formed in Norway, namely in Hetland, a neighboring municipality to Stavanger. At the first national convention that year, Amelia was elected as a member of the first National Spiritual Council for Norway. She was a member of the National Spiritual Council and various committees for a number of years, but she continued her pioneering business without delay. When it needed a bahá ?? in Svolvær she traveled there to fill an empty space, although the climate up there certainly did not fit for her dentistry. For physically strong, Amelia was never, and long journeys were always strenuous for her. By Reid 1963, she again traveled to Haifa, this time as a member of the National Spiritual Council of Norway, and to participate in the election of the First Universal Justice House. She had so often told about her stay there 10 years earlier, and even though Shoghi Effendi had passed away, this visit by the holy tombs also meant very much to her. The World Congress in London immediately afterwards, marking the 100th anniversary of Baha'ah's prophetic mission, also became an event she was delighted to have experienced.

It turned out that the climate in Stavanger was good for her, and she settled there. She often visited Kristiansand and other cities in Sørlandet to teach the faith, she always returned to Stavanger. Her home was open, and everyone, to the resident as to her visiting friends, as well as the Baha'is as others. It was touching to see her concern for other people, her compassion for those who were hurting. Wherever she came, wherever she settled, she was always so, just, yet gentle in her judgment, cautious in her speech, always giving a helping hand to those who needed it.

Source:

Winnie Ringstad, 1976 and Inger Hjelme

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, A LETTER WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI STATED "EX-COMMUNICATION IS A SPIRITUAL THING.... ONLY ACTUAL ENEMIES OF THE CAUSE ARE EX-COMMUNICATED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THOSE WHO CONSPICUOUSLY DISGRACE THE FAITH OR REFUSE TO ABIDE BY ITS LAWS CAN BE DEPRIVED, AS A ..."

May 8. On this date in 1948, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated " ex-communication is a spiritual thing.... Only actual enemies of the Cause are ex-communicated. On the other hand, those who conspicuously disgrace the Faith or refuse to abide by its laws can be deprived, as a punishment, of their voting rights; this in itself is a severe action"

607. Ex-Communication

"Ex-communication is a spiritual thing.... Only actual enemies of the Cause are ex-communicated. On the other hand, those who conspicuously disgrace the Faith or refuse to abide by its laws can be deprived, as a punishment, of their voting rights; this in itself is a severe action, and he therefore always urges all National Assemblies (who can take such action) to first warn and repeatedly warn the evil-doer before taking the step of depriving him of his voting rights. He feels your Assembly must act with the greatest wisdom in such matters, and only impose this sanction if a believer is seriously injuring the Faith in the eyes of the public through his conduct or flagrantly breaking the laws of God. If such a sanction were lightly used the friends would come to attach no importance to it, or to feel the N.S.A. used it every time they got angry with some individual's disobedience to them. We must always remember that, sad and often childish as it seems, some of those who make the worst nuisances of themselves to their National Bodies are often very loyal believers, who think they are protecting the true interests of their Faith by attacking N.S.A. decisions!"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, May 8, 1948)

Comments

MAY 8. ON THIS DATE IN 2005, THE WIPO ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION CENTER DENIED A COMPLAINT FILED BY THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES AGAINST THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL ON THE USE OF THE DOMAIN UHJ.NET.

May 8. On this date in 2005, the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center denied a complaint filed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States against the Second International Bahá'í Council on the use of the domain uhj.net.

The Bahá'í Administrative Order has attempted, through the registration of trademarks and copyrights, to preserve for itself the exclusive right to utilize certain religious symbols and terminology. On August 28, 1934, the Most Great Name symbol was registered as a trademark (Trade-Mark 316,444). Similarly, the "Bahá'í" trademark (Trade-Mark 245,271) was registered with the Patent Office on August 7, 1928.

These trademarks have not prevented the use of the term "Bahá'í" by groups considered Covenant-breakers by the Bahá'í Administrative Order, as upheld in repeated failed litigation.

On May 8, 2005, the Orthodox Bahá'ís, won the case before the World Intellectual Property Organization (see WIPO Case No. D2005-0214) for the use of the domain name uhj.net.

There are several notable notes in the ruling. For example, "Complainant did not send a copy of its request directly to Respondent, apparently believing Respondent had a 'religious objection' to communicating with it. While the Panel appreciates Complainant's sensitivity, it did not interpret the statement that Respondent had, consistent with Respondent's religious beliefs, ignored Complainant's cease and desist letter, to be an objection to receiving communications. Moreover, the Panel reminds Complainant of Rule 2(h): 'Any communication by . . . a Party shall be copied to the other Party, the Panel and the Provider, as the case may be,'"

WIPO Domain Name Dispute: Case D2005-0214, "uhj.net" 2005-08-25 WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States v. Second International Bahá'í Council

Case No. D2005-0214

1. The Parties

The Complainant is National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation with an office in Evanston, Illinois, United States of America. Complainant is represented by Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione, Chicago, Illinois, United States of America.

The Respondent is Second International Bahá'í Council, an entity with an address in Missoula, Montana, United States of America, represented by Neal Chase of Missoula, Montana, United States of America.

1. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name, <uhj.net>, is registered with iHoldings.com Inc., doing business as DotRegistrar.com.

1. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on February 24, 2005. On February 25, 2005, the Center transmitted, by e-mail, to DotRegistrar.com a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On February 28, 2005, DotRegistrar.com transmitted to the Center, by e-mail, its verification, confirming that Respondent is listed as the registrant of the domain name, indicating that it had "locked" the domain name, confirming several details of its registration agreement, and providing the Center with contact information for the registrant. The Center verified that the Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Policy"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy ("Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with Rules 2(a) and 4(a), the Center formally notified Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on March 3, 2005. In accordance with Rule 5(a), the Response was due on March 23, 2005. The Response was filed with the Center on March 23, 2005.

The Center appointed Debra J. Stanek as the sole panelist in this matter on April 22, 2004. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence required by the Center to ensure compliance with Rule 7.

On April 1, 2005, Complainant submitted to the Center, by e-mail, a request to provide a reply, stating that Respondent's submission had made "several inaccurate and confusing statements" that "may need to be addressed."

Because Complainant had indicated that it had not sent a copy of its communication to Respondent, the Center forwarded the request to Respondent. On April 8, 2005, Respondent submitted to the Center, by e-mail, its opposition to the request.

1. Factual Background

The Bahá'í faith, to which both parties to this dispute claim to adhere, was founded in the mid-1800s.

According to Complainant, in 1963, members of the Complainant, along with members of other National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís around the world, created an institution called the "Universal House of Justice." The Universal House of Justice is apparently the highest authority of the Bahá'í faith and has its headquarters in Haifa, Israel.

Complainant owns a United States federal trademark registration, issued in 1965, for the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE for publications. Complainant also claims to have used THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with "other religious activities" involving the Bahá'í faith.

According to the Respondent, the term "Universal House of Justice" is defined, in the will of the founder of the Bahá'í faith and other documents related to its establishment and institutions, as an entity whose president is a descendant of King David, the king of Israel during biblical times. Respondent claims to be a descendant of David and therefore the leader of the "true" Universal House of Justice for the Bahá'í faith.

Respondent registered the <uhj.net> domain name in 2000. Visitors to the "www.uhj.net" website are presented with a page that identifies the site as "The Official Website of the Universal House of Justice." The home page includes a photograph of a Bahá'í shrine located in Israel and a quotation to the effect that the president of the Universal House of Justice must be a descendant of King David and that such leadership distinguishes "the true UHJ from fakes, frauds, and imitations."

1. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant makes the following contentions:

Complainant has been authorized by the Universal House of Justice to serve as the highest authority for the Bahá'í faith in the United States. In addition, the Universal House of Justice has authorized Complainant, exclusively, to use the symbols of the Bahá'í faith in the United States.

The disputed domain name, <uhj.net>, is confusingly similar to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE trademark, which has been used extensively for many years. The acronym "uhj" used by Respondent is recognized and used by followers of the Bahá'í faith to refer to THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark.

Respondent is using "uhj" as an acronym for THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE trademark without the permission or consent of Complainant. The home page for <uhj.net> is identified as "The Official Website of the Universal House of Justice," depicts one of the holiest of Bahá'í shrines, and contains a link labeled "Click here to contact the UHJ" that leads visitors to an e-mail address that is not the address of Complainant or the Universal House of Justice in Israel.

Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. Respondent does not own trademark applications or registrations for the marks THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE or UHJ and is not known by either name. Instead, Respondent is using the domain name to divert those seeking Complainant's website and Respondent has caused actual confusion among followers of the Bahá'í faith.

Respondent registered and is using the domain name in bad faith. Respondent has diverted those seeking the official website of the Bahá'í faith and used misleading designations to confuse followers of the Bahá'í faith and to disrupt Complainant's organization. Further, the content of Respondent's website is not in accord with the teachings of the Bahá'í faith.

B. Respondent

Respondent contends:

Pursuant to various documents, Respondent is the successor to property of the Bahá'í faith, including its intellectual property, because, among other things, he is a descendant of King David. Complainant does not have a right to use the name "The Universal House of Justice," or any Bahá'í property, intellectual or otherwise.

Complainant's registration of the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE was in bad faith, done with the intention of hijacking Respondent's rights.

Respondent is using the domain name in good faith to promote itself as the true Universal House of Justice. Its website is intended to distinguish it from the Complainant; it explicitly refers to the fact that the "true UHJ" must have as its president a descendant of King David.

Respondent has rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. For many years before notice of the dispute, Respondent prepared to use and used the name "Universal House of Justice" and "UHJ" for its legitimate religious, non-commercial purposes as the "true and legal" Universal House of Justice.

Respondent is making legitimate non-commercial, fair use of the domain name, without any intent of commercial gain or any attempt to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark at issue.

Respondent is not affiliated with Complainant and has no desire to confuse those who follow Complainant's teachings. The home page of Respondent's website discloses its views regarding the "true" Universal House of Justice, headed by a descendant of King David, and other "fakes, frauds, and imitations."

The domain name was not registered or acquired primarily for the purpose of selling, renting, or otherwise transferring the domain name registration to Complainant. The domain name was not registered in order to prevent Complainant from reflecting the mark in a corresponding domain name and Respondent has not engaged in a pattern of such conduct.

Complainant is engaging in reverse domain name hijacking.

1. Discussion and Findings

A. Procedural Matters

As noted above, Complainant has requested an opportunity to submit a reply to respond to "inaccurate and confusing statements" in the Response. 1 As an initial matter, neither the Rules nor the Supplementary Rules provide for the filing of a reply.

Although litigants and parties in arbitrations may have a right of reply under the rules of other forums, ICANN chose a different procedure for these proceedings that calls for only a Complaint and a Response. Among other things, this more truncated procedure allows for more rapid and cost effective resolution of domain name challenges. [citation omitted].

See Document Technologies, Inc. v. International Electronic Communications Inc. (WIPO Case No. D2000-0270). Rule 12 does, however, permit a panel to request further documents and statements. Such requests always involve balancing the provisions of Rule 10, which require a panel to ensure both that each party has a "fair opportunity" to present its case and that the proceeding take place with "due expedition."

The Panel is of the view that supplementary submissions are appropriate only in ‘exceptional' cases, such as where new, pertinent facts arose or new, relevant legal authority was reported after a party's submission. See Document Technologies, supra. To seek or accept supplemental submissions under other circumstances undercuts the purpose of the streamlined procedures established by ICANN.

Complainant's cited reason for its seeking to supplement its initial submission was that Respondent made "inaccurate and confusing statements" that "may need to be addressed." In the Panel's view, the cited reason does not fit within the limited circumstances under which supplementary submissions are appropriate.

B. Burden of Proof

In order to prevail, Complainant must prove:

(i) The <uhj.net> domain name is identical or confusingly similar to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark; and

(ii) Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the <uhj.net> domain name; and

(iii) The domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith.

Policy, paragraph 4(a). The Policy sets out four sets of circumstances that may evidence a Respondent's bad faith registration and use under Paragraph 4(a)(iii), see Policy, paragraph 4(b), as well as examples of circumstances that may evidence a Respondent's rights or legitimate interests in a domain name, see Policy, paragraph 4(c).

(1) Identical or Confusingly Similar

Complainant must establish that the disputed domain name is either identical or confusingly similar to its mark. For purposes of considering identity or confusing similarity, the ".net" top-level domain is not relevant.

Complainant's mark is THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. Complainant does not argue that the <uhj.net> domain name is identical to its mark and it is not. Further, Complainant does not claim any trademark rights in "uhj" and has not identified any use by it of "uhj" in any manner, including to identify itself, its activities, the institution in Israel, or the activities of that institution. Complainant must, therefore, establish that the domain name is "confusingly similar" to its mark.

Neither the Policy nor the Rules expressly articulate a test for determining "confusing similarity" and other panels have applied different tests. Some have limited the test to determining the degree of resemblance of the domain name and mark at issue as to "sight, sound, and meaning." Others have considered the degree of resemblance along with factors such as the distinctiveness of the mark, how well-known the mark is, how long the mark has been used, and the nature of the goods and services with which the mark is used.

This Panel has previously concluded that only the degree of resemblance between the Complainant's mark and the disputed domain name should determine confusing similarity. See Columbia Insurance Company v. Pampered Gourmet, WIPO Case No. D2004-0649. As stated in Columbia Insurance, this is because paragraph 4(a) refers only to the identity or confusing similarity while paragraph 4(b)(iv), in contrast, expressly refers to "likelihood of confusion . . . as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement." Further, the Policy is intended to be international in scope, which suggests that -- absent express language -- a panel should be cautious about interpreting the Policy as incorporating a test that may not exist in a number of jurisdictions. See Bradford & Bingley Plc v. Registrant info@fashionID.com 987654321, WIPO Case No. D2002-0499.

Complainant argues that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark. For the reasons set out below, the Panel concludes that "uhj" does not resemble THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE in appearance, pronunciation, or meaning.

The disputed domain name incorporates only the initial letters of three of the five words that make up the mark -- "uhj" -- resulting in significant differences in appearance and pronunciation between the two. The acronym "uhj" has no inherent meaning. Acronyms, by their nature, may stand for more than one combination of words. Although Complainant has provided copies of e-mail messages that seem to suggest that some members of the Bahá'í faith use "uhj" as an abbreviation for the words "Universal House of Justice," the Panel finds that these messages do not establish that the acronym has the same meaning as the words.

First, the only evidence of Complainant's trademark rights is its federal registration for use of the mark in connection with publications. Yet the messages supplied by Complainant do not appear to use the acronym "UHJ" to refer to Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE publications or mark. Instead, they appear to refer to the institution, the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel (for example, requests for prayers, a request to visit shrines in Israel, etc.). Complainant has asserted that it uses THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with "other religious activities" involving the Bahá'í faith. However, Complainant has not provided any evidence of use of the mark in connection with those other activities. In the absence of any evidence, Complainant has not established common law rights in THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark in connection with those unspecified activities, rendering the e-mail messages ambiguous at best.

Second, all of the evidence consists of e-mail messages. The use of acronyms and abbreviations in such messages is common. The Panel is not convinced that this evidence supports a more widespread use and understanding that "UHJ" signifies Complainant's THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE pamphlets or Complainant.

Finally, relying on the understanding of members of the Bahá'í faith to establish the "meaning" of the acronym, is inconsistent with the test of confusing similarity that this Panel has adopted.

The decision in Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Council of the United States v. Alex Yip, WIPO Case No. D2004-0121, supports the Panel's conclusion. In that somewhat analogous case, the panel rejected an argument that the disputed domain name, < svdpusacouncil.org>, was confusingly similar to the registered mark, SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL U.S.A. ST V DE P. The panel noted that "only a part of the registered mark is incorporated into the disputed domain name, and the ‘svdp' portion of the domain name shows up as ST V DE P in the registered mark." Here too, only a portion of the registered THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE mark is incorporated into the disputed domain name.

However, in St. Vincent de Paul, the complainant also contended that over the years, it had been known by the acronym "SVDP." The panel concluded that the acronym had acquired sufficient common law rights to merit protection because it appeared that the acronym had been "used by Complainant for many years to identify it and the charitable services provided by Complainant." In contrast here, there is no evidence that Complainant has ever, at any time, itself used "uhj" to identify itself or its services. Further, and as discussed above, the e-mail messages that Complainant has characterized as showing the use, by members of the Bahá'í faith, of the acronym to identify Complainant are ambiguous.

Complainant cites two decisions by other panels for the proposition that a domain name that is an acronym of a trademark is confusingly similar to the trademark. In Successful Money Management Seminars, Inc. v. Financial Services of California, Claim No. FA0006000095042 (National Arbitration Forum, July 31, 2000), the panel stated that <fssr.com> was confusingly similar to the FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT trademark, for which it was an acronym. However, in that case, the panel's observation was not necessary to the decision because the complainant owned a trademark registration for the mark FSSR and the Panel does not find it persuasive here.

In VeriSign, Inc. v. Michael Brook, WIPO Case No. D2000-1139, the panel concluded that various "vrsn" domain names were confusingly similar to the complainant's VERISIGN trademark. The Panel believes that it is more aptly described as an abbreviation of the mark.2 This distinction is important because an abbreviated form of a trademark is more likely than an acronym to resemble a mark in sight, sound, and meaning. In any case, in the Panel's view, "vrsn" more closely resembles the mark VERISIGN than "uhj" resembles the mark THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

In addition, although Verisign did not use "vrsn" as a trademark, Verisign did use "VRSN" as the symbol under which shares of its stock were publicly traded. As noted above, Complainant has not made any comparable claim or presented any evidence showing that it uses "uhj" in any manner, much less as a mark or other type of identifier.

Under the circumstances of this case, the Panel finds that Complainant has not met its burden of establishing that Respondent's domain name is confusingly similar to a mark in which Complainant has rights.

(2) Rights or Legitimate Interests

As noted above, a complainant must establish each of the three elements outlined in paragraph 4(a) of the Policy in order to prevail. In light of the conclusion that Complainant has not established the first element, it is not necessary to address the issue of Respondent's claim to have rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

(3) Registered and Used in Bad Faith

For the same reasons outlined above, it is not necessary to address the issue of bad faith.

(4) Reverse Domain Name Hijacking

Respondent asserts that Complainant is engaged in reverse domain name hijacking. Reverse domain name hijacking is defined in Rule 1 as "using the Policy in bad faith to attempt to deprive a registered domain-name holder of a domain name."

The Panel finds this case presented challenging issues (although not all are discussed in this decision). The Panel concludes that the Complaint was not an attempt at reverse domain name hijacking.

1. Decision

For all the foregoing reasons, the Complaint is denied.

Debra J. Stanek Sole Panelist

Dated: May 8, 2005

1 Complainant did not send a copy of its request directly to Respondent, apparently believing Respondent had a "religious objection" to communicating with it. While the Panel appreciates Complainant's sensitivity, it did not interpret the statement that Respondent had, consistent with Respondent's religious beliefs, ignored Complainant's cease and desist letter, to be an objection to receiving communications. Moreover, the Panel reminds Complainant of Rule 2(h): "Any communication by . . . a Party shall be copied to the other Party, the Panel and the Provider, as the case may be" (emphasis added). 2 Compare Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 10th edition, s.v. "acronym" (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=acronym) (defining "acronym" as: "a word (as NATO, radar, or snafu) formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term; also : an abbreviation (as FBI) formed from initial letters") with Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 10th edition, s.v. "abbreviation (http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book =Dictionary&va=abbreviation) (defining "abbreviation" as: "2 : a shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole <amt is an abbreviation for amount>").

Comments

Original Index: 1514 | Current Position: 62

MAY 9. ON THIS DATE IN 2014, THE UHJ ADDRESSED A LETTER TO AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER, STATING IN PART "THE CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSION SURROUNDING HOMOSEXUALITY, WHICH BEGAN IN THE WEST AND IS INCREASINGLY PROMOTED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, GENERALLY TAKES THE FORM OF A FALSE DICHOTOMY, WHICH ..."

May 9. On this date in 2014, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer, stating in part "The contemporary discussion surrounding homosexuality, which began in the West and is increasingly promoted in other parts of the world, generally takes the form of a false dichotomy, which compels one to choose between a position that is either affirming or rejecting. But to align with either side in the public debate is to accept the premises on which it is based."

1
Baha'i Faith and
Homosexuality

Comments

MAY 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1997, DENIS MACEOIN POSTED A LETTER CONCERNING WHETHER THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A WORLD RELIGION OR A NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT.

May 9. On this date in 1997, Denis MacEoin posted a letter concerning whether the Bahá'í Faith should be considered a "World Religion" or a "New Religious Movement".

Date: Fri, 9 May 1997

From: Denis MacEoin

Subject: Re: Bahá'í: NRM or World Religion?

Dear All,

Since [another academic] and I have coincidentally just agreed to start a thread on this very subject, let me come in here with a few remarks. **As many of you will know, I have been arguing for years that it is more accurate to describe the Bahá'í faith as a New Religious Movement than a World Religion (especially "a world religion on a par with Christianity, Islam, etc.").** I'll start the ball rolling with a citation from a recent discussion with [another academic].

[The other academic] said:

As to Stephen Lambden's recommendation that you call the Bahá' i Faith a *world religion*, at what point will you reconsider? At the centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, there were 37 chaplains *pastoral associates*) selected to minister to the spiritual needs of the Olympic athletes. These chaplains were chosen to represent six world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá'í Faith. Over time, your refusal to recognize the Bahá'í Faith as a world religion may, in retrospect, underscore this tendency towards tendentiousness in your work.

To which I replied:

As far as the world religion bit goes, I really won't back down on this. **The reason things like the Olympic Games chaplains happen is that the Bahá'ís have done a great PR job in convincing people that they are a world religion. But in what way does Bahá'í fit with Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism?** Numbers? There are at most 5 million Bahá'ís in the world (and probably a very great deal fewer).

That puts them on a par with Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons, and way out of the league of the rest. Time around? 153 years at most, if you include Babism. Again, not in that league. Influence on civilization? About as insignificant as it gets. Nation states adhering to that belief? Zero. To include Bahá'ísm as one of the world's 6 world religions is nonsense and very special pleading. There are no objective grounds for it. Bahá'ís would like to be members of a world religion, but that doesn't make it so.

End of that correspondence.

Let's take it a little further. Peter) [Smith] is right to say that people like Eileen Barker don't treat Bahá'í as a NRM, because it ain't that new. But That doesn't mean I'm wrong to describe it as such. For one thing, I think sociologists have got themselves in something of a twist here, often using 1945 as a cut-off point before which there was nothing called a New Religious Movement. Now, there are reasons for working on that basis: the post-WWII period saw a remarkable burgeoning of NRMs. But that leaves us with the problem of what to do about earlier religious movements which do not comfortably fit the church, sect, denomination, brotherhood, gemeinschaft, or world faith categories. There are anomalies too: why is ISKCON treated as a NRM, when it might be more accurately classified as a sect of Hinduism? And why, for that matter, is Mormonism usually treated as a sect of Christianity, when it might qualify as a NRM? And so on.

I think some sociologists have had their judgement skewed by the cult factor. Books by people like Beckford on *Cult Controversies* (an excellent book, by the way) have tended to create a situation in which the public at large talk of cults, but sociologists talk of NRMs. In other words, NRM is a posh way of describing a cult. And cults tend to generate controversy. Since Bahá'ísm isn't seen as cultish or controversial, it gets declassified. That's another grave error. Bahá'ísm is extraordinarily controversial in Muslim countries, where it is treated exactly like a cult (sinister, operating through cells, brainwashing young people, etc. etc.). Just because Western sociologists still have a focus on Europe and America doesn't mean that perceptions from further afield can not be illuminating.

Having said all that, the debate about Bahá'í being a NRM or not is one that deserves to be carried on in wider circles. It's not the one I'm concentrating on here. In other words, while I do insist that it is nonsense to call the BF a world religion in any real sense, I don't insist on calling it a NRM. My problem is finding a more useful term. Certainly, it isn't a sect, church, or denomination. Unless somebody can come up with a better classification, NRM will have to serve. In any case, if we compare Bahá'í with some of the movements that are now regularly classed as NRMs, the resemblances are often striking. **The Unification Church and Bahá'í have some extraordinary similarities, down to the style of their pamphlets and books, and the themes they express (world brotherhood, oneness of religions, etc.).**

And I'm not sure Peter) is altogether right when he says Bahá'ísm does not have the same features as other new movements. As I've just said, **the resemblances to the Moonies are not minor. Everything depends on what you choose to emphasize and what ignore.** There is no single type of NRM. There's a good summary of different typologies in the early pages of Roy Wallis's *The Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life* . It's not so much a case of fitting Bahá'ísm into one category or another, as seeing common features between it in different phases and other movements. That is particularly true when one brings in some of the other eastern religions that moved to the West in the late 19th C, early 20th C. Of course there are big differences between Bahá'ísm and, say, the Children of God.

I don't mean to push this element too far. I've always stressed that I think Bahá'ísm is the NRM most likely to develop into something more significant in the next fifty years or so (though the time-scale is pure guesswork), and that is because it does have features that make it more genuinely universalist in scope.

Just to reiterate. I'm not being deliberately churlish when I argue against Bahá'ísm being a world religion. There are no formal requirements for entry into the world religion club, but a quick glance at all existing member suggests certain common elements: you should be old (at least 1500 years), you should be the faith of at least one nation state, and preferably a great deal more, you should have created at least one major civilization, you should have a well-developed tradition (scriptures, commentaries, possibly a well-elaborated legal system with books of law, theological schools, philosophical schools, seminaries, etc.), you may be widespread (but need not be), and you should have a well-developed sense of dual tradition (i.e. versions of the 'orthodox' faith existing alongside folk belief in certain regions). The Bahá'í faith doesn't qualify at all. Even the widespread bit does not, frankly, impress me. It has been artificially generated through planned missionary enterprise, something quite common to a lot of modern religions like the UC, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witnesses. The Brahma Kumaris movement has over 3000 centres worldwide, close links to the United Nations, a world headquarters, a Global Vision peace project backed by the UN, etc. Yet it only has about 250,000 members. Soka

Gakkai, on the other hand, has about 16,000,000 members, branches in 115 countries, an international campaign for peace, a consultative role with the UN, and has only been going since 1930 (but really since 1945). Nowadays, becoming global isn't really that difficult.

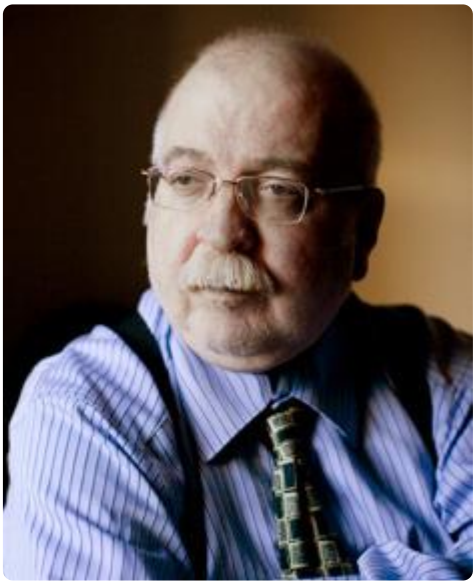
I have, let me add, never denied that the status of the Bahá'í Faith in the eyes of believers is that of a world faith. But the idea that Bahá'ísm stands on a par with Christianity etc. is a theological formulation based on the idea that Bahá' Allah is the latest of God's prophets, not an academic calculation based on membership numbers or real social significance. **It is precisely because Bahá'ís carry out a sort of deception in this respect that I feel compelled to counter the world religion pose.** For example, does anyone know what percentage of the participants or audiences at the Olympic Games were Bahá'ís? I should think it was very few indeed. In which case, why should the Bahá'ís need chaplains more than, say, Sikhs or Transcendental Meditators (4,000,000 worldwide) or devotees of Santeria or Vodoun or Candoble, or lots of other groups? **Merely, I imagine, because it's a status thing, and can be put in volumes of the Bahá'í World (or in pamphlets etc.) in order to impress people and enable the self-fulfilling prophecy to go a stage further.**

To clarify further. **For those of you coming very late to me and my controversies, my use of the term Bahá'ísm is an attempt to introduce to the widest possible use what I see as a neutral term. There is no reason to see it as pejorative, since analogues such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, or, increasingly, Mormonism are value-free. Bahá'í Faith, particularly with a capital 'F' is the official name for the religion, and should only be used in contexts where this is appropriate. This doesn't prevent use of Bahá'í faith, Bahá'í religion, and so on, but it does help avoid the awkwardness of always one phrase.**

That makes me wonder if anyone knows what prompted the UHJ in 1966 to change the official name from Bahá'í World Faith to Bahá'í Faith. I seem to remember that the official explanation was that it avoided any confusion as to whether there was more than one BF: but on reflection that seems a very weak reason. Was something else going on then?

Sorry this has become a bit muddled. But it's an interesting topic and worth getting views on.

Denis MacEoin



Comments

MAY 9. ON THIS DAY IN 1909, ‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ WROTE CHARLES MASON REMEY, WHO, WITH HOWARD C. STRUVEN, WAS THE FIRST BAHÁ'Í TO CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE WORLD AND INTRODUCE THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH TO JAPAN, SAYING, "REST THOU ASSURED THAT THE CONFIRMATIONS OF THE BLESSED PERFECTION SHALL ENCIRCLE THEE FROM ALL SIDES.

May 9. On this day in 1909, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to Charles Mason Remey, who, with Howard C. Struven, was the first Bahá'í to circumnavigate the world and introduce the Bahá'í Faith to Japan, saying "Rest thou assured that the confirmations of the Blessed Perfection shall encircle thee from all sides."

Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven were the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause of God , the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian.

As documented in Agnes Baldwin Alexander's book *History of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan 1914-1938*...

The Bahá'í Message of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh and the dawn of a New Day was first heralded in Japan by Bahá'í travelers who passed through the country. Mr. Charles M. Remey of Washington, D.C. and Howard C. Struven of Baltimore, Maryland, the first Bahá'ís to make the complete circuit of the world, sojourned on their way in Japan. In a Tablet to Mr. Remey, dated May 9, 1909 ‘Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

Rest thou assured that the confirmations of the Blessed Perfection shall encircle thee from all sides. Travel thou with Mr. Howard Struven to Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, and from there depart toward Japan and meet Prof. Barakatullah. Convey to him my yearning greeting and say:

'Endeavor so that thou mayest become a heavenly blessing, infuse the fragrance of life into the hearts of the people of Japan, become thou the first conqueror of that country; hoist the Divine Ensign in that region; become a sign of the Kingdom; build the foundation of the Edifice of God, and like unto the Heavenly Luminary, shine and gleam from the horizon of that region. This is the Most Great Guidance!

This is the Effulgence of the Realm on High! This is the Eternal Outpouring! I hope that thou mayest become assisted thereby.'

Comments

MAY 9. ON THIS DATE IN 1900, 'ABDU'L-KARÍM-I-TIHRÁNÍ ADDRESSED AMERICAN BAHÁ'ÍS ABOUT HIS MEETINGS WITH IBRAHIM GEORGE KHEIRALLA WHO, ALONG WITH ANTON HADDAD, HAD FOUNDED OF THE FIRST AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY. AFTER A PILGRIMAGE TO HAIFA, HE CAME TO BELIEVE THAT 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WAS EQUAL IN ...

May 9. On this date in 1900, 'Abdu'l-Karím-i-Tihrání addressed American Bahá'ís about his meetings with Ibrahim George Kheiralla who, along with Anton Haddad, had founded of the first American Bahá'í community. After a pilgrimage to Haifa, he came to believe that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was equal in rank to his brothers Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, Díyá'u'lláh, and Badi'u'lláh.

STATEMENT OF ABDUL KERIM TO ALL THE AMERICAN BEHAIS.

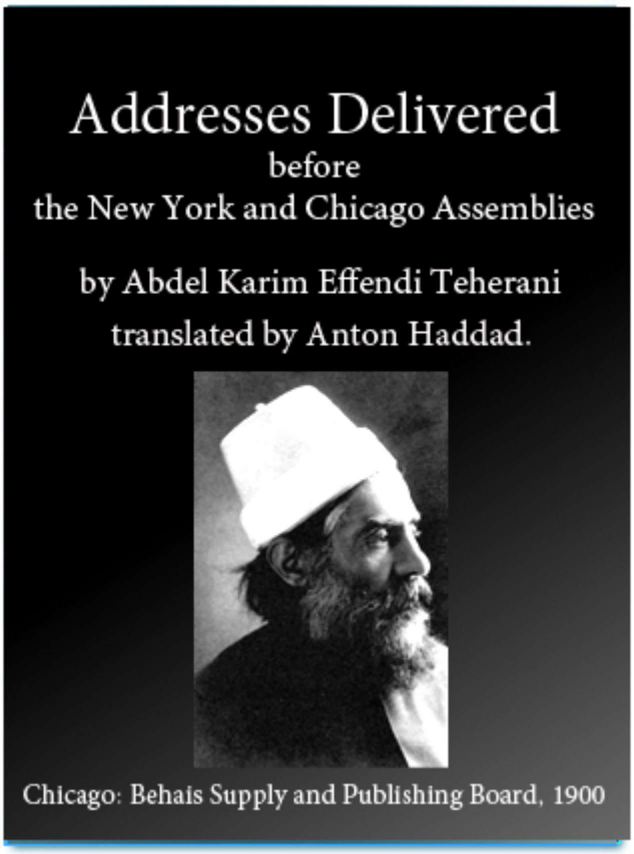
— — — — — — — — — — - New York, May 9, 1900.

Dr. Kheiralla repudiated the authority of our Lord, Abbas Effendi, some months ago, for reasons best known to himself, and was inclined to favor Mohammed Ali, the half-brother of our Lord. Kheiralla's denial of his Master, Abbas Effendi, is well known to the Behais in Chicago, and Kenosha, Wisconsin. The rumors of the state of affairs has caused confusion among the Behais in other cities. Our Lord and Master, Abbas Effendi, becoming informed of Kheiralla's denial of Him, commissioned me to come to America to settle these differences and to bring about peace and harmony, and to unite all the Behais.

I argued and discussed our differences with Kheiralla for several days, and succeeded in proving to him that his attitude toward Abbas Effendi was a mistake. Kheiralla then volunteered to make a public retraction of his statements, and to make a written statement of the same to Abbas Effendi. All of which Kheiralla did on Tuesday evening, May 8, 1900, at Genealogical Hall, before an audience of two hundred Behais. A stenographic report of the meeting was taken and copies forwarded to the Council boards. We now hope and pray to God to strengthen Kheiralla's heart and keep him in the path of righteousness and firm and loyal in the interests of his Lord and Master, Abbas Effendi.

God is most merciful and is the greatest Forgiver. We must try to forgive each other because none of us is infallible. We, one and all, should prove our gratitude to Dr. Kheiralla because he was the first person to bring the Behai teachings to this country, and for this the Americans must be forever indebted to him. We should pray that he will keep to the right course now, and we must all look upon him as our spiritual teacher and brother.

(Signed) Abdul Kerim.



Addresses Delivered
before
the New York and Chicago Assemblies
by Abdel Karim Effendi Teherani
translated by Anton Haddad.
Chicago: Behais Supply and Publishing Board, 1900

Comments

MAY 9. ON THIS DATE IN 2003, DAVID HOFMAN, WHO SERVED ON THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE FROM 1963 UNTIL 1988 AND BEFORE THAT ON THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BRITISH ISLES FOR 27 YEARS, DIED.

May 9. On this date in 2003, David Hoffman, who served on the Universal House of Justice from 1963 until 1988 and before that on the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles for 27 years, died.

David Hoffman was born in 1908 in Poona, India where his father served in the British Army. Educated in England, as a young man he set out to see the world. While in Canada during the 1930s, he encountered the Bahá'í Faith at the home of May and William Sutherland Maxwell in Montreal. He became a Bahá'í and continued his travels, living for a time in Hollywood, California, and appearing in a number of silent movies. Back in England he earned several acting roles in the West End of London and in 1937 became the world's only television announcer on the BBC's first television transmissions. His voice was also heard on the radio, on the BBC's Empire Service.

Following World War II he married former US Olympic athlete Marion Holley, who predeceased him. They had two children. The Hofmans were very active members of the Bahá'í community, establishing Bahá'í communities in Northampton, Birmingham, Oxford, Cardiff, and Watford. Mr. Hofman served for 27 years as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles. To promote books of religious interest, including titles on the Bahá'í Faith, he established the publishing firm George Ronald, whose first title was *The Renewal of Civilization* , a book he wrote as an introduction to the Bahá'í Faith. Years later he authored a biography of Hand of the Cause George Townshend.

David Hoffman was elected to the inaugural Universal House of Justice at the first International Convention in 1963 and served on that body for 25 years, until retiring in 1988. As a member of the Universal House of Justice, David Hoffman was instrumental in applying pressure onthe academic Denis MacEoin.

In 2003, Juan Cole described in a message on the Talisman mail list the pressure placed on Denis MacEoin by the Bahá'í Administrative Order...

Denis MacEoin did not withdraw from the faith, he was chased out by powerful Baha'i fundamentalists who were deeply threatened by the implications of his historical work. Denis became a Baha'i in North Ireland around 1965 and quickly emerged as a Baha'i youth leader. He was chosen to come to Haifa to commemorate the 1968 anniversary of Baha'u'llah's Letters to the Kings.

He then wrote the House saying he did not know whether to serve the Faith by becoming an academic scholar of the Middle East or by going pioneering. They wrote back that either path would be praiseworthy. (They later stabbed him in the back about this). He therefore entered graduate school at Edinburgh in Middle East Studies, then went on to Cambridge University for his Ph.D. He was the first academic to study the Babi movement with all the tools of modern scholarship, and his findings were groundbreaking.

Denis made the mistake of continuing to be an active Baha'i. Since the community is so heavily dominated by aggressive fundamentalist fanatics, if a genuine academic wants to be a Baha'i s/he has to keep a low profile. Denis did not. He gave summer school talks. He was once viciously attacked by Abu al-Qasim Faizi. His new ideas were upsetting the conservative British community. He objected when the Baha'i authorities supported dictators like Pinochet and Bokassa. He corresponded with the Los Angeles Study Class and some of his letters were published in their newsletter (a newsletter that the Baha'i authorities later closed down, for all the world like Tehran ayatollahs pulling a publishing license).

Around 1980, fundamentalist UHJ members Ian Semple and David Hoffman called Denis to a meeting and told him he would have to fall silent (rather as the Vatican did to Leonardo Boff). Hoffman was especially harsh. Denis declined to fall silent, and ultimately withdrew from the Faith. He was pushed out by anti-intellectual bigots who had risen high in the Baha'ihierarchy and become Infallible. Denis's works on the Babi and Baha'i movements are some of the few pieces of solid scholarship that exist.

Instead of being grateful to him for sacrificing all those years living in penury as a graduate student, studying Arabic and Persian, traveling to a dangerous Middle East, all for the service of Baha'u'llah, the community could think of nothing better to do than viciously attack him and throw him in the gutter of infamy.

Denis's story is the story of most thinking people who have anything serious to do with the Baha'i faith. Either they adopt a cult-like mindset of true believers and covenant breakers, in which case they gradually cease being thinking persons, or they get chased out by the wild-eyed. A few people manage to avoid either fate by not drawing attention to themselves. The Baha'i Extreme Orthodox are like the Borg in Star Trek. They want to assimilate you, but might leave you alone if you stay quiet.

cheers

Juan Cole

https://www.juancole.com/

Juan Cole would continue on subsequent posts...

He wasn't saying anything polemic. He was just discovering who the Babis really were from solid historical sources. The powerful Baha'is, who have all the open-mindedness of Wahhabis, did not like it. It did not look like the fireside talks everyone grew up with, so they shoved Denis out of the community with threats of sanctions echoing about his ears.

cheers Juan

and later

Denis's works were mostly published in Middle East or Religion journals or as academic books, and most could be gotten on interlibrary loan. There may be some things at www.bahai-library.org, and there certainly is a bibliography there.

I apologize that I am off to a conference, so cannot go into depth but there are others here who can discuss Denis's findings.

As to why they should have angered anyone, I suppose you'd have to pass them by a Baha'i fundamentalist and they would tell you. You could just ask about MacEoin at e.g. soc.religion.bahai or about his ideas on Babis. Or at beliefnet. I presume you will get an earful. One of them once more or less threatened to cut my head off with a sword, so they can be an irritable bunch.

cheers Juan

https://www.juancole.com/

Comments

MAY 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1902, THE CHICAGO HOUSE OF JUSTICE CHANGED ITS NAME TO THE HOUSE OF SPIRITUALITY. THE BODY REMAINED ALL-MALE.

May 10. On this date in 1902, the Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12.

On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandarání of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for

all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

(30 November 1930)

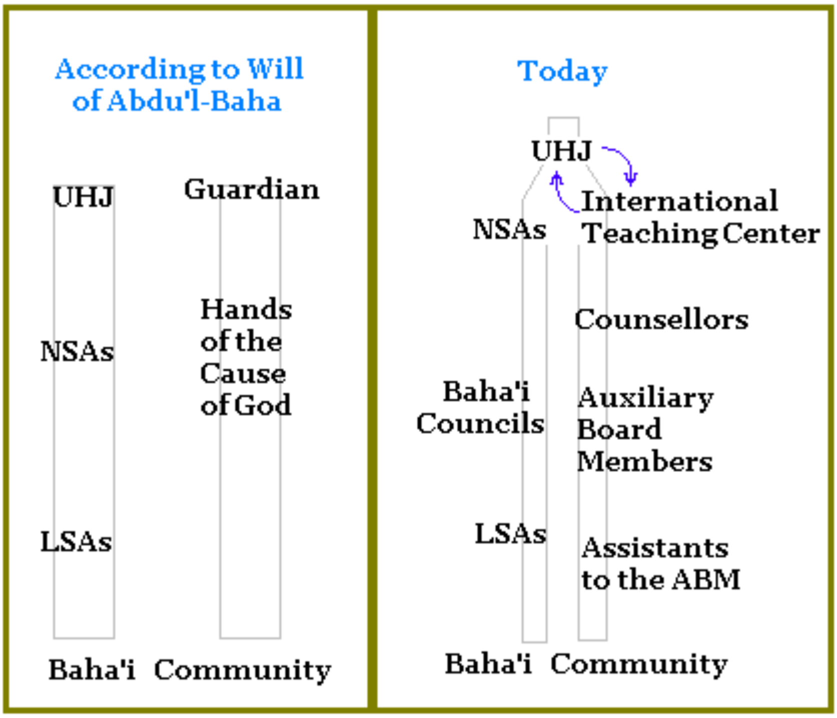
On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.

"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.


According to Will of Abdu'l-Baha
UHJ
Guardian
NSAs
Hands of the Cause of God
LSAs
Baha'i Community
Today
UHJ
NSAs
International Teaching Center
Counsellors
Baha'i Councils
Auxiliary Board Members
LSAs
Assistants to the ABM
Baha'i Community

Comments

MAY 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, RAMONA ALLEN BROWN ARRIVED IN HAIFA FOR HER BAHÁ'Í PILGRIMAGE. IN 1904 SHE HAD CONVERTED TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND IN 1954 MADE A PILGRIMAGE DURING WHICH SHOGHI EFFENDI TOLD HER "PLEASE SHARE YOUR NOTES THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN HERE WITH THE FRIENDS WHEN YOU RETURN HOME."

May 10. On this date in 1954, Ramona Allen Brown arrived in Haifa for her Bahá'í Pilgrimage. In 1904 she had converted to the Bahá'í Faith and in 1954 made a Bahá'í pilgrimage during which Shoghi Effendi told her "Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home" including such statements as "It is not enough to be good and kind and to lead a religious life today; it does not count for much unless one accepts the Manifestation of God, if one has heard of Him; it is almost wasted. **One must accept the Manifestation in His day**"; "All men are not of the same capacity"; "Every city, every town, and every village will have a [Bahá'í] Temple and a House of Justice in the future"; and **"It is essential that the youth of today study deeply the Faith as they will usher in the Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace will be established within this century. The Most Great Peace in the next century"**

One evening Shoghi Effendi said, **"Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home." This I have tried to do ever since, and following are some of the important and interesting things which he said to us while we were his guests in Haifa:**

Bahá'ís must have a new way of life. They need to be different from other people. They must be distinguished. The more distinguished, the more they will attract people. The greater the distinction, the greater the attraction. They must read the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, study the text of the Teachings. **It is not enough to be good and kind and to lead a religious life today; it does not count for much unless one accepts the Manifestation of God, if one has heard of Him; it is almost wasted. One must accept the Manifestation in His day.** If one has not heard of Bahá'u'lláh, they are not to be blame; the blame lies with the Bahá'ís. If the Bahá'ís fail to teach the Faith, the people who do not hear of the Faith are not to blame. The blame lies with the Bahá'ís.

All men are not of the same capacity. To serve to full capacity is meritorious with God. God judges men by how they use their capacity.

Every city, every town, and every village will have a [Bahá'í] Temple and a House of Justice in the future.

There are three processes in teaching: the first is to attract the people; the second is to convert the people; and the third is to be consecrated. There must be attraction, conversion, and consecration. The teachers must not be unwise. There are three Charters to be used: (1) the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, or the Divine Plan; (2) the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with the plan for world administration; and (3) the Tablet of Carmel, the Charter for the development for the World Center of the Faith. the Tablet of Carmel is the symbol of the House of Justice. The Ark is the symbol of the Administrative body. **The higher cave of Elijah is the real one where Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Tablet of Carmel in such a loud voice that the priests heard it.**

It is essential that the youth of today study deeply the Faith as they will usher in the Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace will be established within this century. The Most Great Peace in the next century. The Global Crusade will establish the Bahá'í Faith the world over but will not have a direct influence in establishing the United States of the World. The first period will be that of suffering and cleansing; the second period will be that of unification; and the third, the establishment of the Bahá'í World Faith. After the International State is established and wars cease, the money now being expended for destruction and war will be used for education and science, and a method will be discovered for interplanetary communication, even interplanetary conferences. The time will come when people can cross the entire nation in one hour and eventually beyond the continent into interplanetary travel. **The cycle of six thousand years of city building has come to an end, and now we will have a new pattern starting with villages, etc. Material civilization is becoming like the ancient city of Babylon, and it must be destroyed.**

The young people must disperse far away, the old ones to outlying places; they must settle goal cities. Sell your property and pioneer!...The young people of America should go out into the country on farms and work with their hands and produce food for their families.

Americans are exposed to great dangers. Today the power of America is in the hands of the masses. There is a terrific power in the press, and the people are swayed by it. The

United States, on a national scale, sets the pattern for an international pattern... **There will be a world civil war followed by the establishment of a world state; all the nations will be part of it and will have to conform to it. This war has already started in Korea. Mankind cannot be purified and cleansed without suffering... It is positively dangerous to live in cities. The cities are doomed. They will evaporate... The Bahá'ís must disperse from the cities...why do they not disperse? If they do not respond and disperse, they will suffer spiritually, materially, and physically...In America the destruction will be great!... They must disperse for their own protection. the cities are doomed: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles. They must flee from the United States because America will become the storm center of the future.... Buy property in Central Africa! Those with independent means must pack up and go.... Those with spirit must pack up and go.... There must be a mass response... I can warn them, but I cannot make them go.... The Cause will triumph in spite of the actions and inactivity of the believers.** If one country falls down, another will make up for it. The Bahá'ís have been given the method. Now they must have the spirit. It is hopeless for capable teachers in the cities (the people will not listen).... The friends are calculating too much, and there is too much emphasis on nonessentials.

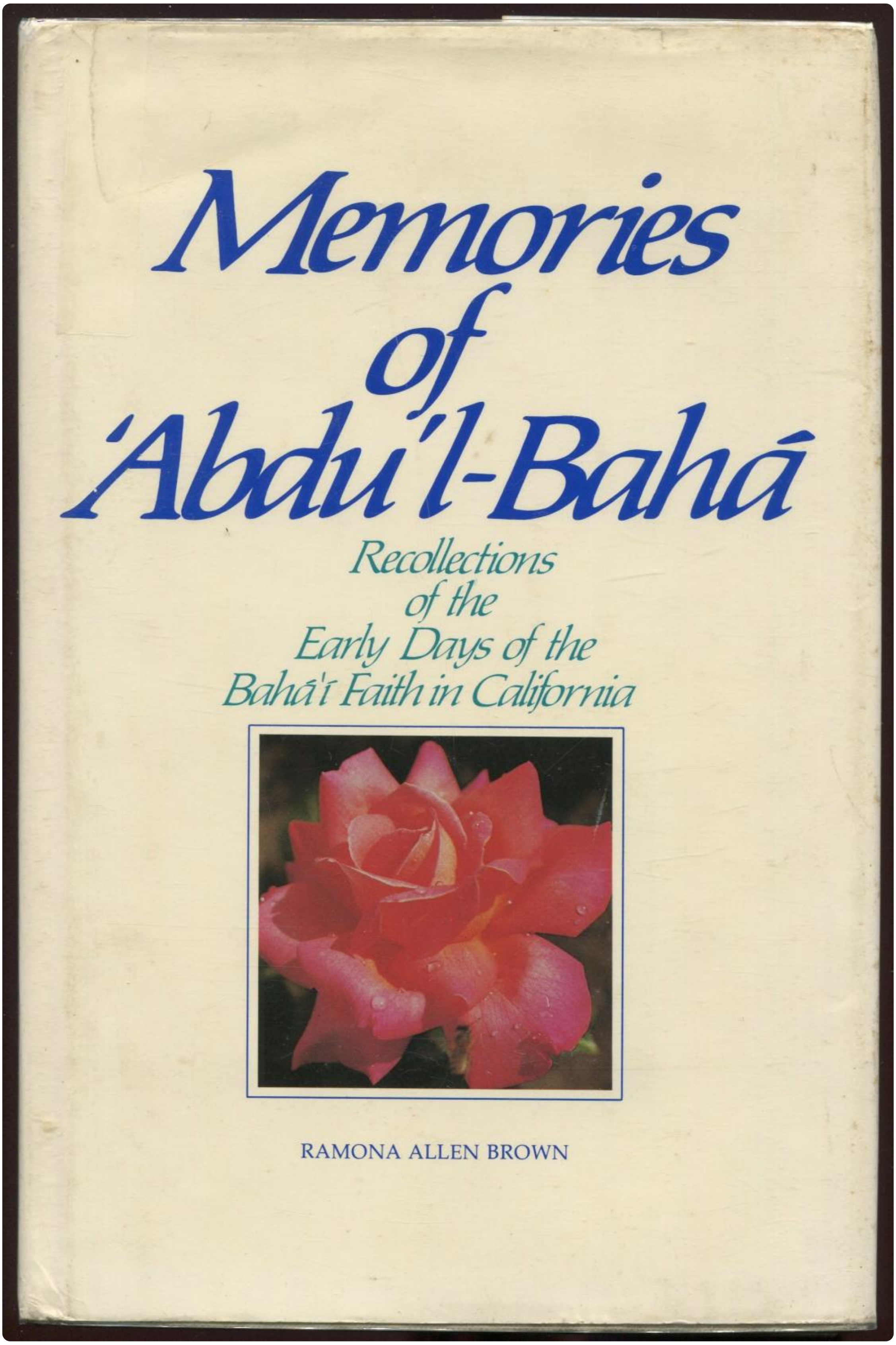
People are flocking to churches through fear. Americans must have a totally new way of life, become a race of wholly devoted souls, devoted to God and His ways. They must get to a simpler way of life. The standards of America must be lowered, have fewer luxuries.... Americans do not have enough belief in God, not enough detachment. They must be more spiritual, disencumber themselves from things, have Bahá'í standards, not American standards. Americans are too materialistic, too mechanized, too attached to family, health, and death. There must be less materialism, less intellectualism, and more spirit... **America is the most disturbed nation, politically, on earth... There is too much organization in America and too little spirit.**

Joseph smith was a seer, not a Prophet of God, neither major nor minor Prophet. He had a high standard... but the Bahá'ís have a higher standard coupled with God's power that comes direct from God. for this age.

We must encourage the marriage of blacks and whites ...Bahá'u'lláh was sent to bring about world unity, and world unity is the cornerstone of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

It is not enough to go pioneering; one must start immediately teaching the Faith... For pioneers to leave their posts means the next to arrive will have to go through the difficulties all over again, and it will be twice as difficult for them... As soon as the community is strong enough, one should leave and pioneer elsewhere.

The new race will be wholly devoted souls.


Memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Recollections of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Faith in California
RAMONA ALLEN BROWN

Comments

MAY 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1966, THE UHJ WROTE "IN ALL CASES OF MARRIAGE OF BAHÁ'ÍS TO FOLLOWERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS THE BAHÁ'Í HAS TWO ESSENTIAL OBLIGATIONS AS REGARDS THE CHILDREN: A. HE MUST NOT EDUCATE OR ASSUME A VOW TO EDUCATE THE CHILDREN OF THE MARRIAGE IN A RELIGION OTHER THAN HIS OWN...."

May 10. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to he NSA of the United States, stating "In all cases of marriage of Bahá'ís to followers of other religions the Bahá'í has two essential obligations as regards the children: a. He must not educate or assume a vow to educate the children of the marriage in a religion other than his own. b. He must do whatever he can to provide for the training of the children in the Bahá'í teachings."

1297. Two Essential Obligations Regarding Education of Children

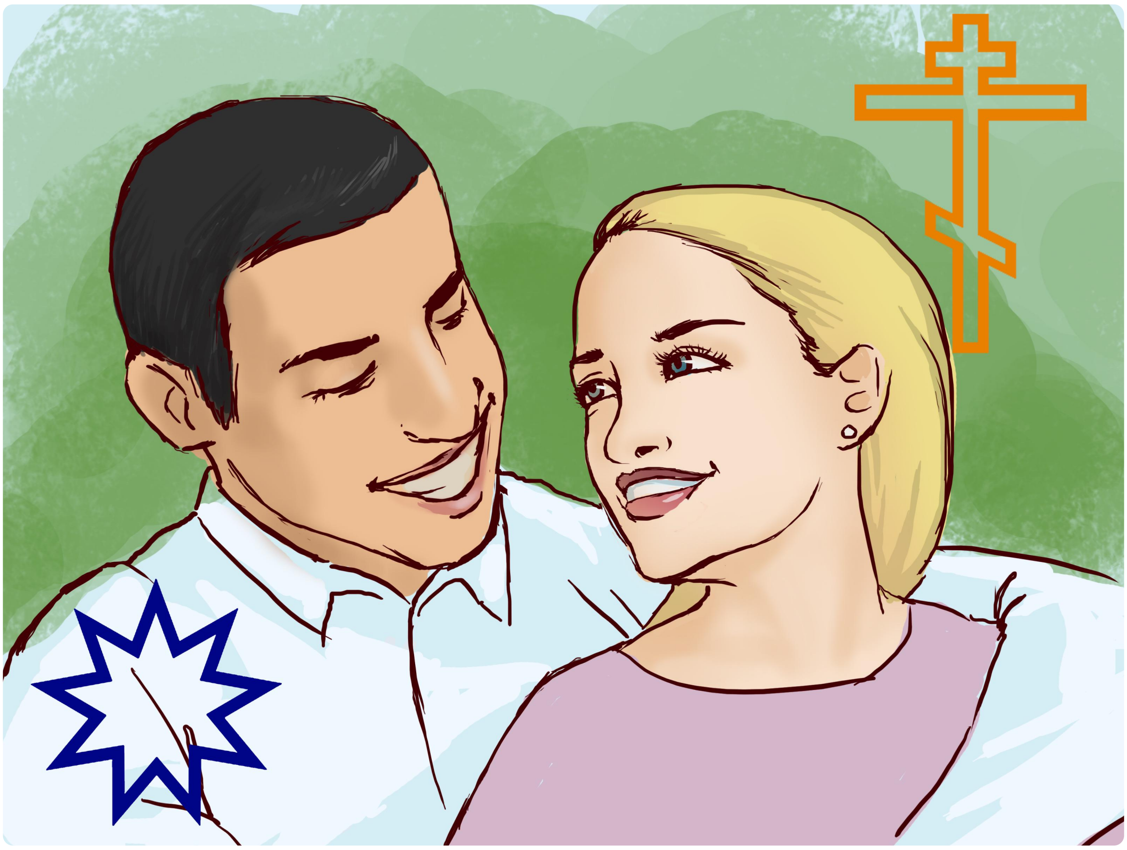
"In all cases of marriage of Bahá'ís to followers of other religions the Bahá'í has two essential obligations as regards the children:

a. He must not educate or assume a vow to educate the children of the marriage in a religion other than his own.

b. He must do whatever he can to provide for the training of the children in the Bahá'í teachings.

"...Bearing in mind the obligation of the Bahá'í parent to offer his child a Bahá'í education, there is no objection to the attendance of the child of a Bahá'í parent, or even a Bahá'í child, at a parochial school if circumstances require."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, May 10, 1966)



Comments

chromedome919: I agree with the UHJ

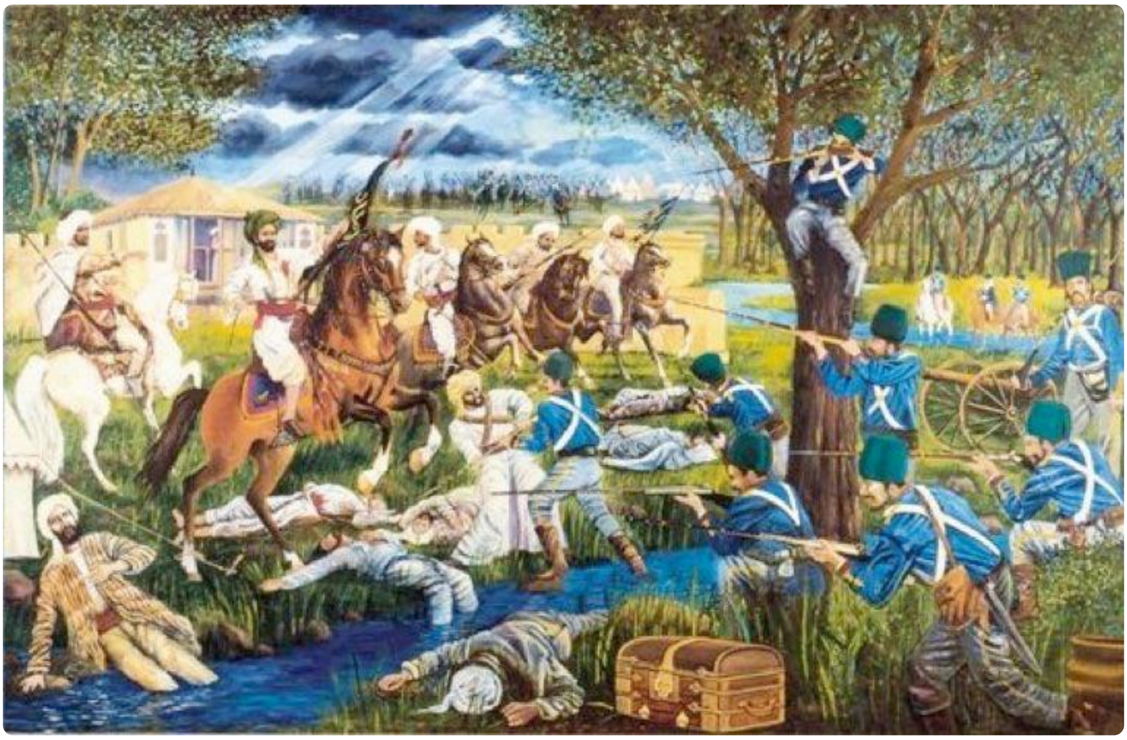
MAY 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1849, THE SIEGE AT THE SHRINE OF SHAYKH TABARSI CAME TO AN END, WITH THE DEFEAT OF THE BÁBI DEFENDERS.

May 10. On this date in 1849, the siege at the Shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi came to an end, with the defeat of the Bábi defenders.

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated. Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings.

Under instructions from the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.



Comments

Original Index: 1512 | Current Position: 71

MAY 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1960, THE CUSTODIANS SHARED WITH ALL HANDS AND NSAS "THE TEXTS OF THE MESSAGES ALREADY RECEIVED BY THE HANDS IN THE HOLY LAND, REFLECTING WIDESPREAD REPUDIATION OF THIS BASELESS CLAIM, AND PLEDGING LOYALTY TO THE DIVINELY-ORDAINED INSTITUTION OF THE HANDS."

May 10. On this date in 1960, the Custodians wrote all Hands and NSAs regarding "Mr. Remey's misguided action proclaiming himself to be the Guardian of the Faith, we are sharing with you the texts of the messages already received by the Hands in the Holy Land, reflecting widespread repudiation of this baseless claim, and pledging loyalty to the divinely-ordained institution of the Hands."

Comments

Original Index: 1513 | Current Position: 72

MAY 10. ON THIS DATE IN 1943, ARGENTINE BAHÁ'ÍS DEDICATED A MEMORIAL AT QUILMES CEMETERY TO MAY MAXWELL, SHOGHI EFFENDI'S MOTHER-IN-LAW, WHO HAD DIED IN BUENOS AIRES THREE YEARS PREVIOUSLY.

May 10. On this date in 1943, Argentine Bahá'ís dedicated a memorial at Quilmes Cemetery to May Maxwell, Shoghi Effendi's mother-in-law, who had died in Buenos Aires three years previously.

Two days later, on May 12, Shoghi Effendi cabled...

111-Completion and Dedication of Maxwell Memorial

12 MAY 1943

DELIGHTED COMPLETION DEDICATION MAXWELL MEMORIAL SYMBOLIC ACT NOBLY CONSUMMATED CONVEY BUENOS AIRES ASSEMBLY CONGRATULATIONS GRATITUDE ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION HISTORIC CEREMONY. APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHS DEDICATION GATHERING.

Shortly after May Maxwell's death in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1, 1940, plans were made for the construction of a memorial at her gravesite. Designed by her husband, William Sutherland Maxwell, and approved by Shoghi Effendi, the memorial was dedicated on May 10, 1943 by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires at Quilmes Cemetery on behalf of the Bahá'ís of North an south America.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

'Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.

The description of Lidia Zamenhoff's life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.

Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:

EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.

His response was decisive:

APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI. [169]

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced *fellahin*, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.

From the following section:

Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:

Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]

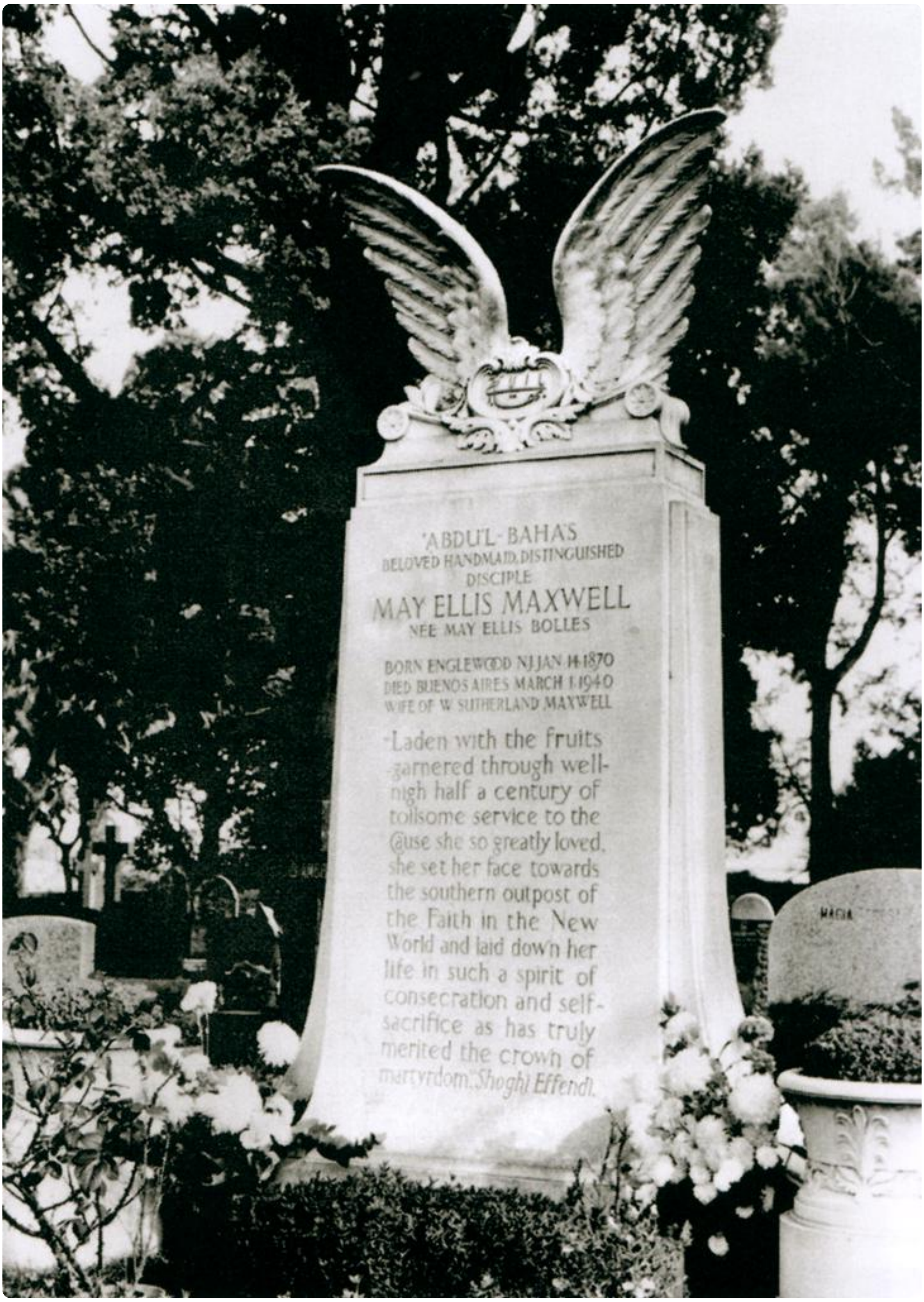
In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:

HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR. [183]

She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.


'ABDU'L-BAHA'S
BELOVED HANDMAID, DISTINGUISHED
DISCIPLE
MAY ELLIS MAXWELL
NEE MAY ELLIS BOLLES
BORN ENGLEWOOD NJ JAN 14 1870
DIED BUENOS AIRES MARCH 1 1940
WIFE OF W SUTHERLAND MAXWELL
"Laden with the fruits
garnered through well-
nigh half a century of
toilsome service to the
Cause she so greatly loved,
she set her face towards
the southern outpost of
the Faith in the New
World and laid down her
life in such a spirit of
consecration and self-
sacrifice as has truly
merited the crown of
martyrdom." Shoghi Effendi.

Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THAT "THE CASE OF AHMAD SOHRAB IS, FOR ONE WHO HAS HAD ANY EXPERIENCE OF ORIENTALS AND OF PSYCHOLOGY, EASILY UNDERSTANDABLE."

May 11. On this date in 1948, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "The case of Ahmad Sohrab is, for one who has had any experience of orientals and of psychology, easily understandable."

11 May 1948

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

Your communications, addressed to our beloved Guardian, and dated January 11th, February 14th, and March 31st, have been received, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

The progress the Faith is making in Germany is a source of great happiness to him, and the list you sent him, showing the large increase in the number of assemblies, groups and isolated Bahá'ís, greatly encouraged him, and he hastened to share this good news with the friends in other countries.

He was, likewise, very pleased to see that the Esslingen School is going to be so well attended, and that your assembly is so wisely making this spot a rallying point for Bahá'í Youth and their friends. Upon receipt of your letter he cabled Mr. Holley to send the food parcels you required for the Summer School, and he hopes that these reach you safely.

He is delighted over the signs of maturity which are becoming increasingly evident in the German Bahá'í Community. Not only is your membership steadily increasing and the number of your assemblies multiplying, but also the fact that most of the believers are realizing the need for breaking off their church membership and standing forth as members of an independent Faith; all these are welcome signs of progress and maturity. And in view of this expansion in Bahá'í membership, and the consequent rapid increase in the number of Spiritual Assemblies, he feels that from now on you should increase the number of delegates, apportioned to the German and Austrian Bahá'í Community, from 19 to 38, (which is of course, twice nineteen.) This will ensure a fairer representation of the numerical strength of the Bahá'ís at their annual Convention, and enable the assemblies having a large community to receive more proportioned representation.

The Cause of God must be protected from the enemies of the Faith, and from those who sow seeds of doubt in the hearts of the believers, and the greatest of all protections is knowledge: there is no doubt that the silliest of all charges ever made is that the "Will and Testament" of the Master is a forgery! It is all in His own hand, sealed in more than one place with His own seal, and was opened after His death by some members of His own family, who took it from His own safe, in this house, and from that day it has been kept in the safe under lock and key. ** The charges of Mrs. White) were the result of an unbalanced mind.** No other enemy, even those who were shrewd and clever, made this foolish accusation! **The case of Ahmad Sohrab is, for one who has had any experience of orientals and of psychology, easily understandable.** He was, for some years the secretary of `Abdu'l-Bahá and enjoyed, as a result of this and the fact that he accompanied Him to America, (to be sure with a number of other Persians), a great deal of attention from the Bahá'ís who looked up to him and admired him. However, since the Master's Will was read, and the administrative order, under the Guardianship&oldid=745828715), began to be developed, he became cognizant of the fact that his personal ambition for leadership would have to be subordinated to some degree of supervision; that he would have to obey the National and local assemblies--just like every other Bahá'í, and could not be free to teach wholly independent of any advice or supervision. This was the beginning of the defection which in the end took him outside the pale of the Faith: he refused not to be handled always as an exception, a privileged exception. In fact, if we keenly analyse it, it is almost invariably the soaring ambition and deep self-love of people that has led them to leave the Faith. Towards the end Sohrab used, in the course of his lectures, to incorporate quotation after quotation of Bahá'u'lláh's words in his lectures, without once stating they were Bahá'u'lláh's, and when the believers remonstrated with him over this plagiarism, it had no effect. After he had, of his own accord, left the organized body of the Faith and refused to be reconciled with it, he began to attack the administrators of it, first the American N.S.A., then the entire administrative order, and in the end the Guardian. What he teaches at present is so far divorced from our beloved Faith, and so tinged with the doctrines of many "cults" which we see thriving at present, as to be almost unrecognizable. Sohrab's influence and activities in America have waned greatly, and he seems to now feel his only chance of causing mischief is to be active with his "caravan" movement abroad. The books and articles he published attacking the Guardian and, in fact, everything established in the Master's Will, had no effect, and far from succeeding in causing any breach in the Faith in America, some of the very few who followed him out of the Cause, gave him up, and returned to serve the Cause with redoubled enthusiasm!

The Guardian feels that one of the best antidotes to those --Sohrab or others--who seek to undermine the faith of the believers, especially by harping on the subject of excommunication, is to place in their hands a German edition of "God Passes By". For in that book he (the Guardian) has clearly pointed out that the Cause of God has always been attacked from within, and that, beginning in the days of the Báb, the "Sea of Truth" has over and over cast out its spiritually dead. It must do this, even as the body seeks to rid itself of poisons so as to preserve the health of the entire organism.

Your assembly should do all it can to protect and educate the believers so that they will understand that it is not personal ill-will, or lack of love, which leads to the excommunication of a person, but rather the fact that he has become like a cancer which must be removed before the entire body is destroyed.

He is very anxious to have the work on the National Headquarters in Frankfurt a.M. reported to him, and to receive pictures of the building purchased, for publication in "Bahá'í World".

The way the work your Assembly is doing is progressing, pleases him greatly, and he assures you all of his loving prayers on your behalf, for your protection and your success....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-workers:

The marvellous progress achieved in recent months by the virile, steadfast and dearly beloved German Bahá'í community has rejoiced my heart, and deepened the admiration of the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, for the qualities of mind and heart that distinguish the adherents of this Cause in your country.

The marvellous increase in the number of newly-enrolled believers, the multiplication of groups and assemblies throughout the length and breadth of your land, the purchase and projected restoration of the national & Haziratu'l-Quds in the city of Frankfurt, the impetus lent to the translation and publication of Bahá'í Literature, the receptivity shown by your country-men to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the consolidation of the various agencies of a steadily expanding Administrative Order in the various zones of your country--all these augur well for the complete fulfilment of `Abdu'l-Bahá's glorious prophecies regarding its future.

The doubling of the number of delegates to the next Bahá'í national convention will eloquently testify to this remarkable growth and rapid consolidation of the community you are privileged to serve and direct. The interests of the Austrian Bahá'í community should, while the work is steadily progressing in Germany, be vigilantly and determinedly promoted. Through guidance, assistance, encouragement, frequent visits when ever possible, the community of the believers in Austria should be nursed and prepared to discharge befittingly its sacred responsibilities, until such time, as has been the case with Canada, as it can elect its own national assembly and assume independent existence within the world-wide Bahá'í community.

At this propitious moment in the evolution of the Faith in your country, at a time when the American, the British, the Indian, the Persian, the Australian, the Canadian and Iraqi national Bahá'í communities are busily engaged in prosecuting specially conceived Plans for the systematic propagation of the Faith within their respective countries and beyond their confines, it is only fitting for a community as old and honoured as yours, which has survived such cruel blows, which occupies so enviable a position in the heart of Europe, the recipient of so great a measure of bounty and loving-kindness from `Abdu'l-Bahá, to formulate its own Plan, preferably a five year Plan, destined to culminate in 1953, the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission in the Siyáh-Chál of Tihrán.

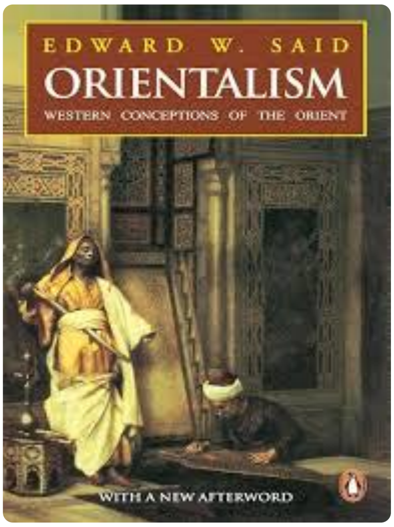
As to the objectives of the Plan, in both Germany and Austria, I feel that your assembly should carefully consider them, and after mature deliberation announce them to the believers and ensure, by every means in its power, the attainment of every goal you set yourselves to achieve.

The launching of such a Plan, after the consolidation of the institutions of the Faith, during the three years that have elapsed since the termination of the war, will constitute a landmark in the history of the Faith in that country, and will, no doubt act as a tremendous magnet, drawing the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh, and contributing, to an unprecedented degree, to the establishment of His Cause in the heart of Europe.

I long to hear the joyful tidings announcing the formulation and inauguration of such a Plan, which will greatly stimulate the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in East and West, and enrich the annals of His Faith during the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century.

May the Spirit of our beloved Master, watching from on high over the destinies of this highly promising, this richly endowed community, enable it to usher in this new phase of internal development of His Father's Faith in that country, in a manner that will redound to the fame and glory of His German-speaking followers.

Shoghi


EDWARD W. SAID
ORIENTALISM
WESTERN CONCEPTIONS OF THE ORIENT
WITH A NEW AFTERWORD

Comments

Original Index: 1499 | Current Position: 74

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, THE INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE WROTE "OF THE INTERNET..THESE OPEN UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES FOR CONTINUOUS PROCLAMATION AND TEACHING, BRINGING THE CREATIVE WORD AND THE SACRED WRITINGS AS WELL AS THE IDEAS OF INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS TO HEARTS AND MIND EVERYWHERE."

May 11. On this date in 1995, the International Teaching Centre wrote "of the Internet..These open unlimited possibilities for continuous proclamation and teaching, bringing the Creative Word and the Sacred Writings as well as the ideas of individual believers to hearts and mind everywhere."

There is an ever increasing use by believers of the Internet and other available computer based means of communication. These open unlimited possibilities for continuous proclamation and teaching, bringing the Creative Word and the Sacred Writings as well as the ideas of individual believers to hearts and mind everywhere. It also offers easy access to these same believers by those whose purpose is to undermine their faith. By being constantly alert we are able to encourage the use of this medium by the friends while ensuring their protection from those who would prey on them.

(From a letter dated 11 May 1995 written by the International Teaching Centre to a Continental Counsellor)

Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1913, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ADDRESSED A LETTER TO MARIE WILSON, REGARDING BAHÁ'Í GATHERINGS AT GREEN ACRE.

May 11. On this date in 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a letter to Marie Wilson, regarding Bahá'í gatherings at Green Acre.

May 11, 1913 To the Maidservant of God. Miss Marie Wilson, Malden, Mass.

Upon her be Bahá'u'lláh el abha.

He is God! O thou severed Maidservant of Bahá'u'lláh! Your detailed letter was received, Praise be to God that it was an indication of thy firmness and steadfastness and a proof of the spirituality of your meetings and gatherings.

The days that I spent in thy house and engaged my time in summoning the people to the Kingdom of God were days of infinite joy and spirituality. They shall never be erased from the tablet of memory. Take care of that house because the light of the love of God was ignited in it. The Fragrances or the Kingdom of Abha, perfumed the nostrils. As thou art obliged, there is no harm done if thou desires to rent it.

Regarding the question of Green Acre, if a number of the Bahá'ís go there with the spirit of unity, and calling the people by day and by night to the Kingdom of Abha and giving the Glad-tidings to all the religions and sects, and live together with the utmost of good-fellowship and show towards each other love and unity, that it may set others to think and wonder - it is very praiseworthy. By this I mean that the presence of the friends in Green Acre may become the means of spreading the Divine Light!

Convey the wonderful Abha Greeting to all the believers and the Maidservants of the Merciful on my behalf, and rejoice them through the Glad-tidings of God.

Your meetings and assemblies, must be in the utmost state of spirituality, and those who are present in the greatest of enkindlement, so that their breathes may penetrate through the arteries and veins of the country.

Upon thee be Baha al Abha

(Signed) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas

Translated by Ahmad Sohrab

May 11, 1913

Paris, France

Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1956, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE, "IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN WE FULFILL THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE WE WILL HAVE BROUGHT INTO FULFILLMENT DANIEL'S GREAT PROPHECY OF 'BLESSED IS HE WHO WAITS AND COMES TO THE 1335 DAYS.' WHAT COULD BE MORE WONDERFUL THAN TAKING PART IN THE FULFILLMENT OF ..."

May 11. On this date in 1956, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of religious prophecy of over 3,000 years!"

148 PIONEERING

"...Sometimes people strive all their lives to render outstanding service. Here is the time and opportunity to render historic services; in fact the most unique in history, aiding in the fulfillment of Daniel's Prophecies of the Last Day, and the 1335 days, when men are to be blessed by the Glory of the Lord, covering the entire globe--which is the real goal of the Ten Year Crusade.

"In other words, when we fulfill the Ten Year Crusade we will have brought into fulfillment Daniel's great prophecy of 'Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days.' What could be more wonderful than taking part in the fulfillment of religious prophecy of over 3,000 years!"

"The pioneers themselves must realize that not only are they fulfilling the wishes of Bahá'u'lláh, and doing that which the Master Himself said He longed to do; namely, to go, if necessary on foot, and carry His Father's Message to all the regions of the earth; but they are enhancing the prestige of the Faith to a remarkable degree in the eyes of the public, and specially in the eyes of the officials. There is no doubt that the rapid forward march of the Faith recently has attracted a far greater measure of attention on the part of the thoughtful people, and people of position in society and in educational fields, than has been the case for almost one hundred years.

"Therefore, each pioneer must feel his responsibility very heavily, and understand that his calling is far above the average service; and his duty to remain at his post a very pressing one indeed."

Ten years previous, on May 4, 1946, referring to a prophecy in the last two verses of Daniel, Shoghi Effendi had stated, "The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963."

1414. Predictions of Peace, Prophecy of Daniel--1335 Days

"Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask, namely, 'Blessed is he who cometh unto the thousand three hundred and thirty five days'. These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: From a Tablet to a Kurdish friend: The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 31, Shoghi Effendi and Lady Blomfield)

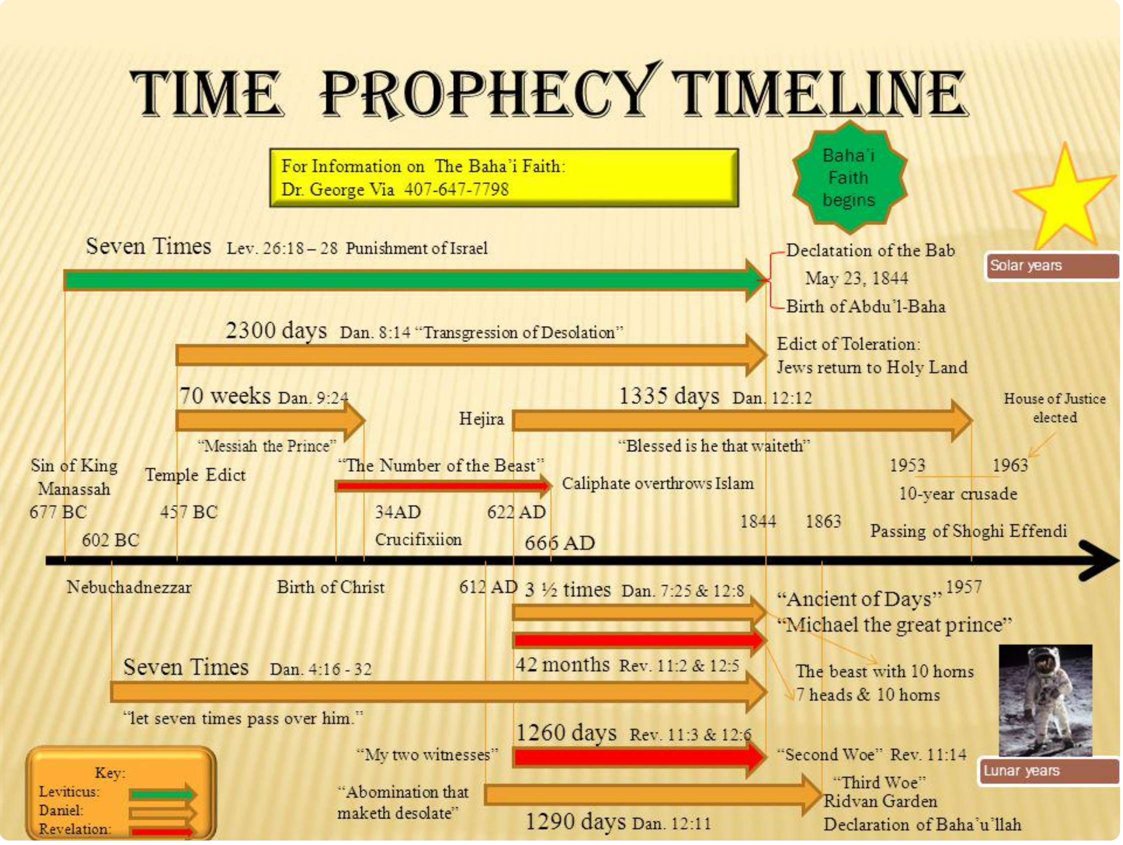
"...The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963.

"There is one thing of importance for the Bahá'ís to understand; and that is, that this prophecy refers to happenings within the Faith, not occurrences outside the Faith. It refers specifically to the spread of the Faith over the face of the earth. This will be accomplished when the Bahá'í Faith is firmly established in all the virgin areas outlined in the Ten-Year Crusade, and the other goals of the Crusade are completed. Thus it behooves us to work day and night in order to accomplish this glorious goal."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 4, 1946: Some Extracts from Letters written on behalf of the Guardian on the subject of the Prophecy of Daniel: A Compilation from the World Centre to the compiler)

A reference to this prophecy from Daniel is one of the notable posthumous edits from John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)



TIME PROPHECY TIMELINE

For Information on The Baha'i Faith:
Dr. George Via 407-647-7798

Baha'i Faith begins

Solar years

Seven Times Lev. 26:18 – 28 Punishment of Israel

Declatation of the Bab
May 23, 1844
Birth of Abdu'l-Baha

2300 days Dan. 8:14 "Transgression of Desolation"

Edict of Toleration:
Jews return to Holy Land

70 weeks Dan. 9:24
"Messiah the Prince"

Hejira

1335 days Dan. 12:12
"Blessed is he that waiteth"

House of Justice elected

Sin of King Manassah
677 BC

602 BC

Temple Edict
457 BC

"The Number of the Beast"

Caliphate overthrows Islam

34AD
Crucifixiion

622 AD

666 AD

1844

1863

1953

1963

10-year crusade

Passing of Shoghi Effendi

Nebuchadnezzar

Birth of Christ

612 AD

3 ½ times Dan. 7:25 & 12:8

"Ancient of Days"

1957

"Michael the great prince"

42 months Rev. 11:2 & 12:5

The beast with 10 horns
7 heads & 10 horns

Seven Times Dan. 4:16 - 32
"let seven times pass over him."

1260 days Rev. 11:3 & 12:6

"My two witnesses"

"Second Woe" Rev. 11:14

Lunar years

"Abomination that maketh desolate"

1290 days Dan. 12:11

"Third Woe"
Ridvan Garden
Declaration of Baha'u'llah

Key:
Leviticus: 🟩
Daniel: 🟧
Revelation: 🟥

Comments

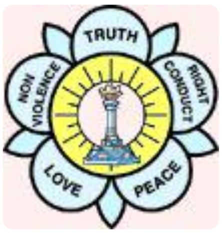
MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1941, FUAD AFNAN, SHOGHI EFFENDI'S FIRST COUSIN WHO WAS THE SON OF MUHSIN AFNÁN AND TÚBÁ KHÁNUM, DIED AS A RESULT OF INJURIES SUSTAINED IN AN AIR RAID IN LONDON WHERE HE WAS VOLUNTEERING AS AN AIR RAID WARDEN. THE FUAD MUHSIN AFNAN MEMORIAL FUND FOR "BAHAI STUDENTS IN NEED"

May 11. On this date in 1941, Fuad Afnan, Shoghi Effendi's first cousin who was the son of Muhsin Afnán and Túbá Khánum, died as a result of injuries sustained in an air raid in London where he was volunteering as an Air Raid Warden. The Fuad Muhsin Afnan Memorial Fund for "Bahai students in need" at the American University of Beirut was established in his honor in 1971 by his brother Soheil Afnan.

Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1993, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE TO A NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING THE SAI BABA MOVEMENT, STATING "BAHÁ'ÍS, OF COURSE, CANNOT ACCEPT THE CLAIM OF THE FOUNDER OF THE MOVEMENT, OR HIS SUCCESSOR, THAT HE IS THE EQUIVALENT OF WHAT WE UNDERSTAND TO BE THE..."

May 11. On this date in 1993, the Universal House of Justice wrote to a National Spiritual Assembly regarding the Sai Baba movement, stating "Bahá'ís, of course, cannot accept the claim of the founder of the movement, or his successor, that he is the equivalent of what we understand to be the Manifestation of God, even though he may have been inspired with the spirit of the age. It is clear in the Bahá'í Writings that such an august Figure is not to appear before the expiration of at least a full thousand years after the coming of Bahá'u'lláh."



Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1933, ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL WROTE SHOGHI EFFENDI ABOUT BAHÁ'Í ORTHOGRAPHY, AND LATER RECEIVED THE REPLY "IT IS A HIGHLY RECOMMENDABLE SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION AND THIS IS WHY THE GUARDIAN IS SO EMPHATIC ABOUT ITS UNIVERAL ADOPTION BY THE BAHÁ'ÍS THE WORLD OVER."

May 11. On this date in 1933, Adelbert Mühlschlegel wrote Shoghi Effendi about Bahá'í orthography, and later received the reply "it is a highly recommendable system of transliteration and this is why the Guardian is so emphatic about its univeral adoption by the Bahá'ís the world over."

27 June 1933

Dear Dr. Muhlschlegel:

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge on his behalf the receipt of your letter dated May 11th, 1933, together with the enclosed Program of the Bahá'í meetings held in Stuttgart and Esslingen, all of which he has carefully read and deeply appreciated.

In regard to the transliteration of Oriental names and words into German he wishes me to inform you that the system of transliteration actually in use in the Bahá'í world has been adopted and approved with only slight changes by a general Orientalist Congress representative of world's greatest orientalists including some outstanding German authorities in various branches of Oriental history and literature. As you see, therefore, it is a highly recommendable system of transliteration and this is why the Guardian is so emphatic about its univeral adoption by the Bahá'ís the world over. Any departure from that system, he strongly feels, may lead to incalculable difficulties and misunderstandings in the future. He would certainly urge you to adopt it yourself and then advise our German friends to do the same in all their official Bahá'í publications and particularly in the forthcoming issues of the "Sonne der Wahrheit" wherein some chapters of the "Dawn-Breakers" are going to be published.

Concerning the date of the anniversary of the Báb's declaration the Guardian feels that it would be preferable to postpone the consideration of this problem until the Universal

House of Justice is established. In the meantime he would advise you to follow the system actually in use in the Bahá'í world, i.e. (year 9.) even in Germany. According to this system the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Faith should be celebrated in May of the year 101, that is when we enter the second Bahá'í century. By year 90 we should not mean that 90 years have elapsed since the declaration of the Báb but that we are in the 9th year. But whether it is preferable to adopt this system or that suggested by you and which, you remark, is in use among Christians and Moslems, the future House of Justice has to decide.

Touching the Bahá'í funeral service the Guardian would like you to know that it is of an extreme simplicity, consisting as it does of a congregational prayer which has not yet been translated into any western language but which Shoghi Effendi is planning to have it translated and circulated among the friends. The friends and relatives of the deceased who are unwilling to attend the service should not be forced to do so.

In closing may I extend to you the loving greetings of the Guardian....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

This is to assure you how glad and gratified I feel to learn that the German believers are taking so active a part in the international activities of the Cause. Their thoroughness, ability, patience and open-mindedness highly qualify them to assume such responsibilities and undertake so great a task. I trust that the letters you will soon be sending to the British High Commissioner for Palestine will be a prelude to the brilliant services you are destined to render to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Bahá'í orthography is peculiar for a several reasons. Despite a purported purpose of systematizing pronunciation, Bahá'í orthography fails to accomplish this goal for the very name of the religion itself. While the accent and phonemic diacritic marks in the word "Bahá'í" indicate a three syllable pronunciation as [bæhɒːˈʔiː], the official pronunciation guide of the Bahá'í World News Service gives a two syllable pronunciation of "Ba-High," /bəˈhaɪ/. Amin Banani's A Bahá'í Glossary and Pronunciation Guide notes that the exact realization of the English pronunciation varies. The *Oxford English Dictionary* has /bæˈhɑːiː/ ba-HAH-ee, *Merriam-Webster* has /bɑːˈhɑːiː/ bah-HAH-ee, and the *Random House Dictionary* has /bəˈhɑːiː/ bə-HAH-ee, all with three syllables.

For many common names, the Bahá'í orthographic transliteration can often differ markedly from more common standard transliterations presently in use.

Bahá'í Orthography	Standard Transliteration	Persian pronunciation	Arabic pronunciation	Perso-Arabic Spelling
Ádhirbáyján	Azerbaijan	[ɒzeɾbɒːjˈdʒɒːn]	[ʔæðeɾbiːˈdʒæːn]	آذربایجان
Fátimih	Fatima	[fɒːteˈme]	[fɑːˈtˤɪmæ, ˈfɑːtˤɪmæ]	فاطمه
Shoghi	Shawki	[ˈʃoːɣi]	[ˈʃæwʔi, ˈʃɑwqi]	شوقی
Siyyid	Sayyid	[sejˈjed]	[ˈsæjjɪd]	سید

Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, AN INDIVIDUAL WROTE A LETTER TO THE NSA OF THE U.S. LAMENTING "SPIN DOCTORING" DONE BY THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY ON THE MAY 19, 1994 LETTER OF THE UHJ, IN ORDER TO MAKE A MORE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON THE DELEGATES AND VISITORS TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

May 11. On this date in 1995, an individual wrote a letter to the NSA of the U.S. lamenting "spin doctoring" done by the National Spiritual Assembly on the May 19, 1994 letter of the Universal House of Justice , in order to make a more favorable impression on the delegates and visitors. The NSA responded with a letter dated July 23, 1995.

Letter dated July 23, 1995 from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to "a Bahá'í Friend" published in *American Bahá'í* on July 30, 1995...

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

July 23, 1995

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The National Spiritual Assembly appreciates your taking the time to share with it your impressions of the 86th National Convention and your ideas for stimulating the growth and development of the American Bahá'í community. At its June meeting, the National Assembly discussed the points raised in your May 11, 1995 letter and offers the following responses for your consideration.

The National Assembly regrets that your experience as a visitor to the National Convention did not leave you with the same "spiritual lift" that you have experienced from other National Conventions. Most disappointing was that you attribute this to "spin doctoring" done by the National Spiritual Assembly on the May 19, 1994 letter of the Universal House of Justice , in order to make a more favorable impression on the delegates and visitors.

You allege that the National Assembly has sought to avoid responsibility for the May 19 letter of the Universal House of Justice by suggesting that the letter was intended for others. Yet, the letter itself testifies that it was written in direct response to questions raised by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Supreme Body. **As noted in the letter, the National Assembly requested a meeting with the House of Justice to present its concerns about the growth and development of the American Bahá'í community. The House of Justice states that the meetings were, "a new fact of history," and that their "...hearts were touched by the candour, courage, and sincerity with which your members presented your concerns, as well as by the spirit of optimism you displayed despite the overwhelming challenges and burdens which prompted your request for a meeting with us."**

Their response, the May 19 letter, while applicable in principle to Bahá'ís everywhere, speaks specifically to the challenges facing the National Assembly and the American Bahá'í community. **Moreover, the entire structure of the National Assembly's Annual Report, and of the National Convention itself, was conspicuously altered in response to issues raised in the May 19 letter, as is stated in the opening paragraph of the Annual Report.**

The statements made at the Convention about the difficulties of administering the affairs of the Bahá'í community and that no university for Bahá'í administration exists, cannot be understood out of the context in which they were presented. Likewise, the statements about the intended recipients of the May 19 letter, which you heard "second-hand without attribution," cannot be accepted as a sound indicative of the position of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Since the National Assembly itself posed the questions and issues to the Universal House of Justice addressed in the letter, it would be unreasonable to conclude that the National Assembly would not ponder deeply and take action on the answers that it received. Indeed, the May 19 letter's specific relevance to the circumstances and conditions of the American Bahá'í community is precisely what prompted the National Assembly to share it immediately with the friends.

You complain that, "for the most part, open and frank consultation did not obtain during the Convention, because the Convention seemed structured to avoid it." You cite as an example that the consultation on the May 19 letter was "restricted" to the "closed Saturday morning post-balloting session only." The Convention agenda was presented to the delegates and ratified at the first session. Moreover, before the opening of the National Convention, the delegates attended a day-long deepening on consultation, conducted by the Counselors. The goal was the refinement of the delegates' consultative skills, and the fostering of an environment at the National Convention in which delegates would feel completely free to express their hopes, concerns and grievances. The results of this kind of training, conducted for the last several years, were noticeable in the frank inquiries from the delegates and the recommendations and suggestions they offered. That this Convention was no different can be observed on the highlights tape sent to every delegate for his/her post-Convention report. **Moreover, this year, in the light of the May 19 letter, the National Assembly went to great lengths to survey the issues of concern to the delegates before the Convention, to provide question and answer sheets on troubling questions that circulate in the community but might not be raised on the Convention floor, and to open a room in which delegates could review the financial records of the National Assembly with the help of its Controller.**

No restrictions were placed on the discussion of the May 19 letter. The May 19 letter was the sole focus of consultation in the session after the delegates voted for the National Spiritual Assembly. However, frequent reference to its contents was made throughout the Convention. National Assembly members who spoke during the discussion of the May 19 letter, did so in response to questions posed by delegates. Toward the end of that session, the Convention Chairman asked the delegates whether they wished to extend the discussion into the afternoon session. The delegates voted not to do so.

Both the Counselors and the National Spiritual Assembly were deeply moved by the candor of the delegates. Perhaps the restraint that you stated you sensed in some of the delegates can be attributed, as one of the delegates said, to their consciousness of the need to present their views in a manner that reflects the spirit of the House of Justice's December 29, 1988 letter concerning individual rights and freedoms in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The Supreme Body instructs us that, "content, volume, style, tact, wisdom, timeliness are among the critical factors in determining the effects of speech for good or evil. Consequently, the friends need ever to be conscious of the significance of this activity which so distinguishes human beings from other forms of life, and they must exercise it judiciously."

In the same letter, the Universal House of Justice further comments that the principle of judicious use of language also applies to the written word. In this context, we address your suggestion that *The American Bahá'í* become an "objective newspaper" conducting "real journalism," with its own independent board of Bahá'í professional journalists responsible for editorial decision-making. It was never the intention of the National Assembly for the *American Bahá'í* to serve as a "regular" newspaper. **Though it is produced on newsprint as a cost-saving measure, *The American Bahá'í* is a periodical for publishing information on the policies and priorities of the Universal House of Justice, the Counselors and the National Spiritual Assembly and its agencies. In addition, it publishes news of the activities and opinions of the believers in response to the goals of the community. All articles are edited and reviewed following the publications review policies of the Universal House of Justice.**

The National Spiritual Assembly will always require an organ for the dissemination of institutional and community news.

To change *The American Bahá'í* into an "objective newspaper," not "simply a house organ of the NSA" would not only deprive the National Assembly of a necessary institutional publication, but would also ignore certain cautions of the Supreme Body. You will recall that in its December 29, 1988 letter, after stating that the Bahá'í community's emergence from obscurity does not mark its attainment of maturity, the House of Justice asked:

Has he [Shoghi Effendi] not advised us all that the subsequent stage of oppression must precede the stages of its emancipation and its recognition as a world religion? ... Those who are anxious to relax all restraint, who invoke freedom of speech as the rationale for publishing every and any thing concerning the Bahá'í community, who call for the immediate termination of the practice of review now that the Faith has emerged from obscurity -- are they not aware of these sobering prospects?

You asked that the National Spiritual Assembly decentralize and restructure "with an increased emphasis on teaching and refocusing finances. Decentralization is a major goal of the National Assembly. You may recall that the plan for reorganization of the national administration and the decentralization of several functions was first published in *The American Bahá'í* in September 1992. Most aspects of that plan have been implemented. However, financial restraints prevented the establishment of the Regional Teaching and Administrative Committees which the National Assembly had envisioned. In its letter of June 21, 1995, the National Spiritual Assembly announced its intention to proceed with the decentralization plans. Assemblies were invited to submit, by August 1, 1995, their suggestions, proposals and comments about how regional committees might best serve the Bahá'í communities, groups and isolated believers in their areas. Feedback from the Assemblies will be analyzed by the National Spiritual Assembly's Decentralization Task Force, discussed with the Continental Counselors and reported to District Conventions for further comments from the friends.

Decentralization, however, will not reduce the National Budget. It will expand the Bahá'í community's capacity better to manage the growth and development of the community as a whole. Throughout its discussions of this subject, the National Assembly has been mindful of Shoghi Effendi's admonition to strive for balance in order to avoid the "evils of overcentralization" and the "perils of utter decentralization with the consequent lapse of governing authority from the hands of the National Representatives of the believers..."

It may interest you that virtually all of the national agencies directly serve key aspects of the teaching and community development functions; this is not solely the work of the National Teaching Committee's Office. Decentralization of some teaching and administrative functions will reduce the heavy burden on the Bahá'í National Center and strengthen greatly the administrative foundation of the national community.

Currently, the agencies of the national administration are understaffed and under funded. Years of Fund deficits and repeated staff reductions have resulted in extreme austerity, with most of the friends at the National Center performing several functions at significant sacrifices to themselves and their families.

You state the "many NSA members serve as full-time paid employees, and some receive substantial perquisites." The reality is that three members of the National Assembly are compensated for their services -- the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary and the Secretary for External Affairs. The National Assembly annually reviews their status and establishes their compensation based on need, just as it does with other employees. There are no perquisites included.

The average level of compensation for staff of the National Assembly is $23,400, quite low considering the cost of living in Greater Chicagoland.

Moreover, despite an annual inflation rate in the Chicago area of 4%, the National Center personnel have only received increases totaling 3% over the last 14 years. A more detailed discussion of these and other questions can be found in the materials distributed at the National Convention.

We are saddened that the subject of compensation of the friends who serve the National Spiritual Assembly, at significant financial and professional sacrifice, has become a point of conjecture and contention among some of the believers.

The primary burden of the National Fund is properties, not staff, or the 3% spent on travel and other expenses. Maintenance and repair of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, the permanent schools and institutes, and the Bahá'í National Center costs millions of dollars each year. These funds are almost never available when needed and, therefore, must be borrowed. The accumulation of funds borrowed over time for building repairs accounts for the deficit in the National Fund. What you describe as "extraneous properties" are routinely sold, with the exception of those of negligible value for which buyers are difficult to find.

We hope that this information, and the detailed reports distributed at the National Convention will dispel the concerns held by a few members of the community.

The National Assembly agrees with your suggestion to create an "idea forum" to tap the creative talent of the community. As we stated in the Annual Report, the community regularly contributes volunteer services valued at over $4 million dollars per year. Among those volunteers are Bahá'ís with expert knowledge and experience in a wide range of fields, who are regularly called upon to help evaluate and refine the function of the National Center offices, the Teaching Committee, the Treasury, Fund Development, the schools, the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, the Bahá'í Home, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, property repairs and virtually all other functions.

In addition, social development efforts such as race unity, gender equality, and community development depend on the enthusiastic participation of a large number of believers. To help identify such human resources across the community, the National Assembly is establishing an electronic talent network.

Our Fund Development plans are described in detail in the National Convention materials.

Citing the assessment of the National Spiritual Assembly that too few of the friends are infected with a passion for teaching and, therefore, our progress is slow, you recommend that the National Assembly "stop blaming the Bahá'ís" and "take responsibility." The National Assembly's cares about the progress of the teaching work arise from an analysis of the patterns of teaching and proclamation in the community developed from the reports of the visits around the community by members of the National Spiritual

Assembly and the National Teaching Committee, repeated surveys, and regular discussions with the Counselors and the National Teaching Committee.

The purpose of that segment of the Annual Report was to remind the friends that only the followers of Bahá'u'lláh have been given the "duty and privilege" of teaching His Cause and to call their attention to the need to intensify their teaching efforts and increasingly organize their activities around this important work. As for the activities you suggest, these are within the competence of Local Spiritual Assemblies to undertake.

We are in complete agreement with your suggestion to "take the Bahá'í teachings outside." Greater involvement in the life of society is one of the major goals of the Three Year Plan. As stated in the Annual Reports, the National Assembly is pleased with the community's progress on two fronts in this regard. The first is the Faith's leadership role in helping to shape national policy such as the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The second is the national prominence the American Bahá'í community has gained through its leadership in race unity. Bahá'í communities sponsored over 1200 race unity events last year, in conjunction with other organizations, institutions and municipalities.

The pattern of practical application of Bahá'í principles has become one of the brightest aspects of Bahá'í life in the United States. As the pattern continues to grow, the teaching work will accelerate and the influence of Bahá'í thought will become evident.

Likewise, the National Spiritual Assembly agrees that there is the need for activities that would enrich the spiritual life of the believers. The Bahá'í Writings repeatedly stress the importance of the friends' obedience to the laws of God and application of the teachings and principles to their daily lives as the true means to becoming more spiritual. When the friends study deeply and put into practice the Sacred Scriptures their spiritual lives cannot help but be enriched. Also recommended for such study are the compilations entitled, Trustworthiness, Spiritual Foundations: Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude, the Bahá'í Life and The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith.

'Abdu'l-Bahá reminds us that the Nineteen Day Feast provides the means for helping the individual believer and the community attain a more spiritual life. In time, the friends will come to appreciate the significance of the Feast more fully.

As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this Feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endued with a power that is not of this world.

The Master also encouraged the friends to conduct "spiritual meetings" of prayer and music.

As you noted, the study of mysticism represents a fertile field for spiritual growth. In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a Local Spiritual Assembly, the following statement is made about mysticism:

...The Guardian feels ... should study more deeply the teachings, and meditate on what he studies. We liken God to the Sun, which gives us all our life. So the Spirit of God reaches us through the Souls of the manifestations. We must learn to commune with Their Souls, and this is what the Martyrs seemed to have done, and what brought them to such ecstasy of joy that life became nothing. This is the true mysticism, and the secret, inner meaning of life which humanity has at present, drifted so far from.

At the end of your letter you indicate that you are offering your comments with "love, obedience and respect." The National Spiritual Assembly finds it difficult, however, to reconcile this with the words you have chosen to use in your letter and with its overall tone. You have implied that the National Spiritual Assembly has deliberately misled the friends to serve its own purpose, has acted improperly and has lost the trust of the American Bahá'í community. To allege that the National Assembly would employ the political device of "spin doctoring" information that it presents to the believers is unconscionable and contrary to the spirit and form of Bahá'í Administration. Turning again to the National Assembly's Annual Report, you will note that it follows the guidance of the Universal House of Justice in the May 19 letter:

Do as Shoghi Effendi advised you: 'Banishing every vestige of secrecy, of undue reticence, of dictatorial aloofness, from their midst, they [the National Spiritual Assembly] should radiantly and abundantly unfold to the eyes of the delegates, by whom they are elected, their plans, their hopes, and their cares. They should familiarize the delegates with the various matters that will have to be considered in the current year, and calmly and conscientiously study and weigh the opinions and judgement of the delegates.'

The aspersions that were cast on the integrity of the National Spiritual Assembly and its members by a slanderous mailing that had been distributed throughout the community, created an atmosphere of distrust that even made a few believers

withhold contributions from the National Fund. To dispel their doubts, the National assembly made available to the delegates its financial records and made an effort to answer any questions that the delegates may have had while setting before them the "plans, hopes and cares" of the National Assembly for the final year of the Three Year Plan.

In the conclusion of the May 19 letter, the Universal House of Justice offers the National Spiritual Assembly and the American Bahá'í community assurance and encouragement that we can meet the increasingly difficult challenges we face with "undiminished hope and confidence."

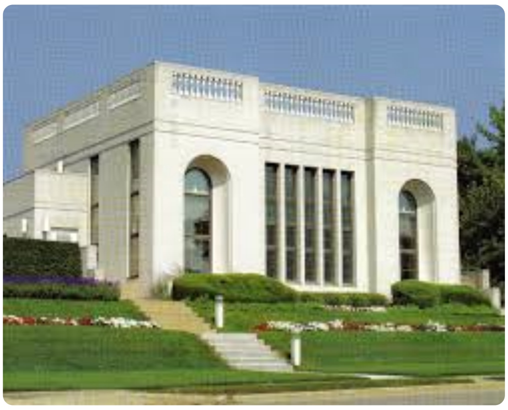
The divine promises to your community are certain; the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh are assured as you strive to fulfill His purpose. The wings of the beloved Master remain spread over you that you may succeed in discharging the tasks He has especially entrusted to your care. And our love ever surrounds you and your cherished community, growing stronger at every moment. Step forward then to meet the requirements of the hour with undiminished hope and confidence.

The National Spiritual Assembly appreciates the seriousness of your issues and hopes that its remarks will allay your concerns.

You are in our prayers and in our hearts.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

(signed) Robert C. Henderson



Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 2007, MALIETOA TANUMAFILI II DIED. HE WAS THE FIRST HEAD OF STATE AND REIGNING CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCH TO CONVERT TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

May 11. On this date in 2007, Malietoa Tanumafili II died. He was the first head of state and reigning constitutional monarch to convert to the Bahá'í Faith.

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

Interestingly, while Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter disputes this claim...

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

MAY 11. ON THIS DATE IN 2007, FRANK LEONARD WYSS DIED. HE WAS AN AUSTRALIAN BAHÁ'Í WHO SERVED ON THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA IN THE 1950'S AND BECAME THE KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE COCOS ISLANDS.

May 11. On this date in 2007, Frank Leonard Wyss died. He was an Australian Bahá'í who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia in the 1950's and became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Cocos Islands_Islands].

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Knights of Bahá'u'lláh Lilian Wyss (Ala'i) and Frank Wyss

Comments

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MAY 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1869, HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD CLARA DUNN WAS BORN IN LONDON, ENGLAND. SHE WAS RAISED IN CANADA AND MOVED TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1902, WHERE SHE BECAME A BAHÁ'Í. IN 1919, ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND JOHN HENRY HYDE DUNN, CLARA DUNN INTRODUCED THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH TO AUSTRALIA.

May 12. On this date in 1869, Hand of the Cause of God Clara Dunn was born in London, England. She was raised in Canada and moved to the United States in 1902. In 1907 she met John Henry Hyde, and Englishman then married to Fannie Dunn, in Walla Walla, Washington, when he and Nathan Ward Fitzgerald sought to place an advertisement for a Bahá'í meeting they were holding in the medical office she was working at. She attended the meeting and later became a Bahá'í. She met Hyde again when attending a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá when he visited California in 1912, and the two would get married.

On April 18, 1919, Englishman John Henry Hyde Dunn and his wife Clara Holder Davis Dunn disembarked from their ship in Sydney, opening Australia to the Bahá'í Faith. Perhaps the most famous Australian Bahá'í is Cathy Freeman, an Aborigine who in the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics had the honor of lighting the stadium's Olympic flame in the cauldron within a circle of fire. She also carried the Australian Flag and Aboriginal flag after winning the 400 meter race at the Sydney Olympic Games. She had her **Bahá'í administrative rights suspended** for political activism on behalf of Aboriginal Australians.

It is worth remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's views on native, indigenous people and cultures.

`Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry;

wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.**

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of**

primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

MAY 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1925, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE A LETTER TO THE AMERICAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LATER INCLUDED IN THE BOOK "BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION."

May 12. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter to the American National Assembly later included in the book *Bahá'í Administration*).

Letter 26

To the members of the American National Assembly. Dearly-beloved fellow-workers:

I have read with deep interest your two recent communications dated April 4th and 18th, and am gratified to learn of the steady expansion of your manifold activities.

Election of National Assembly

Regarding the method to be adopted for the election of the National Spiritual Assemblies, it is clear that the text of the Beloved's Testament gives us no indication as to the manner in which these Assemblies are to be elected. In one of His earliest Tablets, however, addressed to a friend in Persia, the following is expressly recorded:--

"At whatever time all the beloved of God in each country appoint their delegates, and these in turn elect their representatives, and these representatives elect a body, that body shall be regarded as the Supreme Baytu'l-'Adl (Universal House of Justice)."

These words clearly indicate that a three-stage election has been provided by `Abdu'l-Bahá for the formation of the International House of Justice, and as it is explicitly provided in His Will and Testament that the "Secondary House of Justice (i.e., National Assemblies) must elect the members of the Universal One," it is obvious that the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies will have to be indirectly elected by the body of the believers in their respective provinces. In view of these complementary instructions the principle, set forth in my letter of March 12th, 1923, has been established requiring the believers (the beloved of God) in every country to elect a certain number of delegates who, in turn, will elect their national representatives (Secondary House of Justice or National Spiritual Assembly) whose sacred obligation and privilege will be to elect in time God's Universal House of Justice.

Should the appointing of the delegates be made a part of the functions of local Spiritual Assemblies, who are already elected bodies, the principle of a four-stage election would be introduced which would be at variance with the provisions explicitly laid down in the Master's Tablet. On the other hand, were the local Spiritual Assemblies, the number of whose members is strictly confined to nine, to elect directly the members of the National Spiritual Assembly-- thus maintaining the principle of a three-stage election-- all Bahá'í localities, which must necessarily differ in numerical strength, would then have to share equally in the election of the National Spiritual Assembly--a practice which would be contrary to fairness and justice. Moreover, the central principle guiding for the present the administration of the Cause has been to make the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies as independent as possible in the conduct of such affairs as fall within their province, and to lessen the hampering influence of any institution within their jurisdiction that might, whether directly or indirectly, impair their authority and prestige.

Membership Roll

I would also strongly urge the members of every incoming National Spiritual Assembly to take all necessary steps to insure that every local Assembly throughout America, without any exception whatsoever, should immediately after its election send the complete list of its members together with the full address of its secretary to the National Secretary, who in turn will forward them to me directly, enclosing his own address as well as the list of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. It would also be extremely helpful, should actual circumstances permit, to devise with the wholehearted assistance of every local Assembly ways and means for the compilation of an authoritative, up-to-date, and exhaustive list of recognized believers in America, supplemented by the full address of each believer's permanent residence--this list to be continually revised according to every change affecting the residence and number of such believers. This would be particularly advisable in view of the permanent residence of isolated believers in various parts of the country, as well as of those who form parts of groups as yet numerically too small for the formation of a local Spiritual Assembly.

However desirable these steps may be, it is evident that they are secondary in their importance and urgency to the pressing and ever-increasing issues that vitally affect the spread and the consolidation of the work which you are called upon to perform, and which it is my privilege to assist in and serve. I am enclosing a preliminary list of Bahá'í centers throughout the world, exclusive of Persia, which, though inadequate, may still, I trust, be of some help to you. I would welcome any additions or corrections you might be able to make and hope it will evolve into a valuable section of the contemplated Bahá'í Year Book.

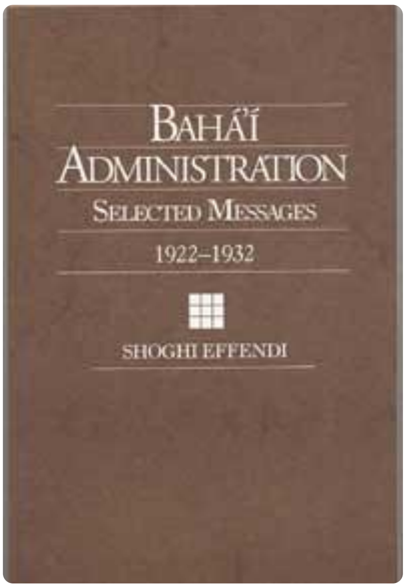
I wish to assure you, in conclusion, of my heartfelt appreciation of your devoted labors in the Divine Vineyard.

Your brother and fellow-worker,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

May 12, 1925.



BAHÁ'Í
ADMINISTRATION
SELECTED MESSAGES
1922–1932
SHOGHI EFFENDI

Comments

MAY 12. ON THIS DATE IN 1943, SHOGHI EFFENDI CABLED ARGENTINE BAHÁ'ÍS HE WAS "DELIGHTED (AT THE) COMPLETION (AND) DEDICATION (OF THE) MAXWELL MEMORIAL," WHICH WAS DEDICATED TO HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW WHO HAD DIED THERE THREE YEARS PREVIOUSLY OF A HEART ATTACK. SHOGHI EFFENDI DECLARED HER A MARTYR.

May 12. On this date in 1943, Shoghi Effendi cabled Argentine Bahá'ís he was "delighted (at the) completion (and) dedication (of the) Maxwell Memorial," which was dedicated to his mother-in-law who had died there three years previously of a heart attack during a teaching trip. Shoghi Effendi declared her a martyr.

May Maxwell was born in Englewood, New Jersey on January 14, 1870. An early American Bahá'í, she was married to Hand of the Cause of God William Sutherland Maxwell, who designed the Shrine of the Báb, and was the mother of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

The Sutherland's were active Bahá'ís throughout their lives. For example, on September 2, 1912, during his tour of North America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk in the Maxwell's Montreal home where he presented his views on native cultures, Africans, indigenous North Americans and pre-Columbian America.

May Maxwell died on March 1, 1940, of a heart attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where she was teaching the Faith. Shoghi Effendi, her son-in-law, gave her the status of martyr.

Shortly after May Maxwell's death in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1, 1940, plans were made for the construction of a memorial at her gravesite. Designed by her husband, William Sutherland Maxwell, and approved by Shoghi Effendi, the memorial was dedicated on May 10, 1943 by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires at Quilmes Cemetery on behalf of the Bahá'ís of North an south America.

On May 12 1943, Shoghi Effendi cabled Argentine Bahá'ís he was "delighted (at the) completion (and) dedication (of the) Maxwell Memorial.

111-Completion and Dedication of Maxwell Memorial

12 MAY 1943

DELIGHTED COMPLETION DEDICATION MAXWELL MEMORIAL SYMBOLIC ACT NOBLY CONSUMMATED CONVEY BUENOS AIRES ASSEMBLY CONGRATULATIONS GRATITUDE ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS SPIRITUAL PARTICIPATION HISTORIC CEREMONY. APPRECIATE PHOTOGRAPHS DEDICATION GATHERING.

Shortly after May Maxwell's death in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 1, 1940, plans were made for the construction of a memorial at her gravesite. Designed by her husband, William Sutherland Maxwell, and approved by Shoghi Effendi, the memorial was dedicated on May 10, 1943 by the Bahá'ís of Buenos Aires at Quilmes Cemetery on behalf of the Bahá'ís of North an south America.

Keith Ransom-Kehler, who died of small pox in Isfahan on October 23, 1933, is considered the first American Bahá'í martyr.

May Maxwell, who died of a heart attack while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Argentina in 1940, was designated a martyr by her son-in-law Shoghi Effendi.

But Lidia Zamenhoff, who died in a Nazi concentration camp while teaching the Bahá'í Faith in Poland, was explicitly stated not to be a martyr.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about May Maxwell on March 3, 1940...

‘Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid, distinguished disciple May Maxwell (is) gathered (into the) glory (of the) Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly life, so rich, eventful, incomparably blessed, (is) worthily ended. To sacred tie her signal services had forged, (the) priceless honor (of a) martyr's death (is) now added. (A) double crown deservedly won. (The) Seven-Year Plan, particularly (the) South American campaign, derive fresh impetus (from the) example (of) her glorious sacrifice. Southern outpost (of) Faith greatly enriched through association (with) her historic resting-place destined remain (a) poignant reminder (of the) resistless march (of the) triumphant army (of) Bahá'u'lláh. Advise believers (of) both Americas (to) hold befitting memorial gathering.

Shoghi Effendi cabled the following about Lidia Zamenhof on January 28, 1946...

Heartily approve nationwide observance for dauntless Lydia Zamenhof. Her notable services, tenacity, modesty, unwavering devotion fully merit high tribute by American believers. Do not advise, however, that you designate her a martyr.

The description of Lidia Zamenhoff's life in Esther Schor's *Bridge of Words* might be of some surprise to those who are only familiar with her portrayal from official Bahá'í sources.

The Bahá'í leadership organized to have Lidia brought to tour and teach in the United States. Their plan was to have her work there, but they neglected her, failing to do proper legal paperwork and poorly accommodating her.

By the time Lidia's visa expired, her extension request was denied because she was found working without a work permit, which her Bahá'í handlers had not obtained. Her friends in the United States pleaded with her to not return to Poland, on account of her Jewishness and the expected invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, which would occur in 1939.

Lidia Zamenhof wrote Shoghi Effendi, pleading for guidance and help. In a final desperate plea she even asked him to give her asylum in Haifa, a request that was tersely denied. Shoghi Effendi told her she must return to Poland because they "need" her there to spread the Bahá'í Faith there. She returned to Poland and spent her last days recruiting for the Bahá'í Faith, ultimately managing to convert one person. Even after her return to Poland, she wrote Shoghi Effendi stating her intention to stay in Poland a few weeks and then go to France. Again, Shoghi Effendi wrote her, telling her to remain in "your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown." Lidia Zamenhof would eventually be killed by the Nazis.

Later friends of Lidia petitioned the Bahá'ís to formally declare her a martyr of the Faith. Their request was denied.

The story is related in *Bridge of Words*, pages 181 to 195 in the 7th and 8th sub-chapters titled "The Priestess" and "Vanishings".

Here is a passage detailing her interactions with Shoghi Effendi:

...the day her visa expired, she learned that her extension had been denied on the ground that she had violated employment regulations. If there had been any doubt, it was now clear: she had been ill-advised and ill-served by her handlers, who had failed to apply for an available waiver for employment laws. Though her friend Ernest Dodge did his utmost for months to plead her case, he was only able to secure an extension until early December.

Advice from friends streamed in: she should go to Cuba, Canada, France, California--anywhere but Poland--and reapply for a visa. Panic was not in her nature, but anxious and fearful, she once again turned to the Guardian for advice. Heller quotes her cable in full:

EXTENSION SOJOURN AMERICAN REFUSED. FRIENDS TRYING TO CHANGE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. OTHERWISE RETURNING TO POLAND. PLEASE CABLE IF SHOULD ACT OTHERWISE.

His response was decisive:

APPROVE RETURN TO POLAND. DEEP LOVING APPRECIATION. SHOGHI.[169]

Still she waited, hoping that her fate would turn for the better. For a time, an invitation seemed to be forthcoming from Canada, but "the Canadians aren't courageous enough. . . . they 'see difficulties.'" This time, when she requested Shoghi Effendi's permission to meet him in Haifa, she was seeking refuge, not transcendence. He cabled his reply:

REGRET DANGEROUS SITUATION IN PALESTINE NECESSITATES POSTPONEMENT OF PILGRIMAGE.

She wrote, with the humility of a medieval pilgrim, that she knew it was because "such privilege is not often received and that certainly one must deserve it, and second--because of the war in Palestine." Indeed, Haifa was dangerous. Strategically important because of an oil pipeline, Haifa had been the target of attacks by displaced *fellahin*, by the Irgun, and by the Royal Navy trying to stem the tide of gunrunner and terrorists. Surely Shoghi Effendi knew that to ensure Lidia Zamenhof's safety, he would have to shelter her in his compound, and this he was not prepared to do.

She told her anguished friends that she intended to return to Poland: after all, Shoghi Effendi had advised it, and it was God's will that she rejoin her family in a time of trouble.

From the following section:

Protest was not an option for Lidia Zamenhof when she returned to Warsaw in the winter of 1938. She was reconciled to her fate, and when her faith needed shoring up, she wrote long letters to her Bahai friends: "If I left America," she wrote, "perhaps it was because God preferred that I work in another land." She was writing bleak allegories: Christmas trees with candles that burn for a moment and go dark; a country called "Nightland," "where the sun had not risen for so long that it had nearly been forgotten."[176] After she wrote to Shoghi Effendi that she planned to stay in Poland a few weeks, then go to France, his secretary replied:

Although your efforts to obtain a permit [in the United States] . . . did not prove successful, you should nevertheless be thankful for the opportunity you have had of undertaking such a long and fruitful journey. He hopes that experiences you have gathered during all these months . . . will now help you to work more effectively to spread the Cause in the various European countries you visit, and particularly in your native country Poland, where the Faith is still practically unknown.[127]

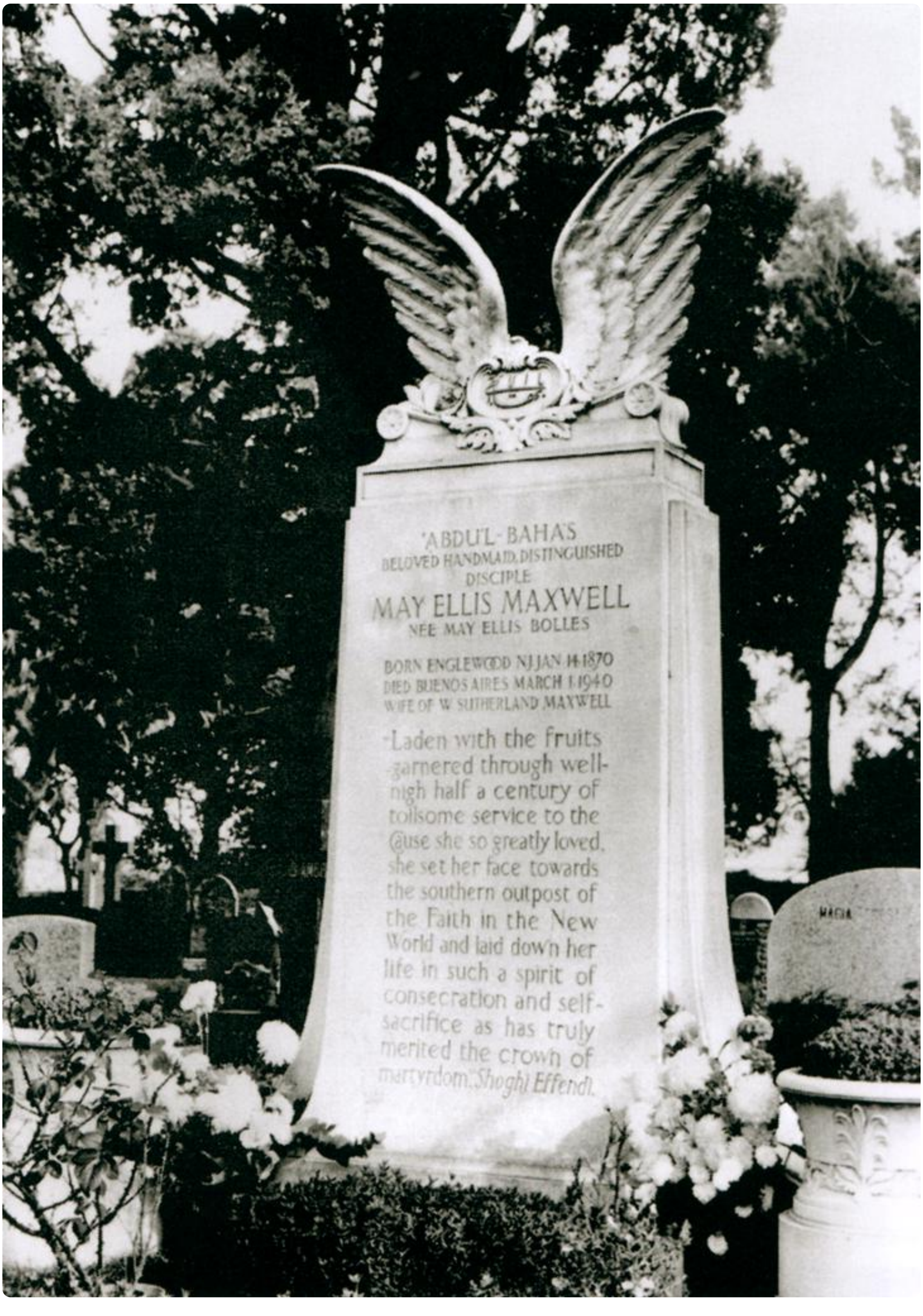
In a postscript, the Guardian himself wrote that he looked forward to meeting her "face to face in the Holy Land" at a time "not far distant." In the meantime, she was to bring Bahai to the Poles, lecturing, paying calls, and translating sacred Bahai texts into Polish. After eighteen months of effort, she could count all the Bahais in Poland on one hand.

The chapter goes on to detail the circumstances of her capture and death, and the last paragraph is as follows:

A few months after the war ended, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada began to plan a memorial service for Lidia Zamenhof. They consulted Shogh Effendi: shouldn't she be designated among the martyrs of the Bahai faith? On January 28th, 1946, the eve of what would have been Lidia's forty-second birthday, Shoghi Effendi cabled his American followers:

HEARITLY APPROVE NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE FOR DAUNTLESS LYDIA ZAMENHOF. HER NOTABLE SERVICES, TENACITY, MODESTY, UNWAVERING DEVOLUTION FULLY MERIT HIGH TRIBUTE BY AMERICAN BELIEVERS. DO NOT ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU DESIGNATE HER A MARTYR. [183]

She had intended to give her life for the Bahai faith, but died as an Esperantist, a Zamenhof, and a Jew.


'ABDU'L-BAHA'S
BELOVED HANDMAID, DISTINGUISHED
DISCIPLE
MAY ELLIS MAXWELL
NÉE MAY ELLIS BOLLES
BORN ENGLEWOOD NJ JAN 14 1870
DIED BUENOS AIRES MARCH 1 1940
WIFE OF W SUTHERLAND MAXWELL
"Laden with the fruits garnered through well-nigh half a century of toilsome service to the Cause she so greatly loved, she set her face towards the southern outpost of the Faith in the New World and laid down her life in such a spirit of consecration and self-sacrifice as has truly merited the crown of martyrdom." Shoghi Effendi.

Comments

Original Index: 1497 | Current Position: 86

MAY 12. ON THIS DATE IN 2008, THE UHJ WROTE "AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS, AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT FOR THE ACQUISITION OF A RECTANGULAR PLOT OF LAND 90,000 SQUARE METRES IN AREA, LOCATED BETWEEN BAHJÍ AND THE MAIN ROAD. THIS LAND WAS BEING USED BY THE GOVERNMENT."

May 12. On this date in 2008, the Universal House of Justice wrote "After several years of negotiations, agreement was reached with the Israeli government for the acquisition of a rectangular plot of land 90,000 square metres in area, located between Bahjí and the main road. This land was being used by the government."

The Universal House of Justice

12 May 2008

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As the worldwide Bahá'í community proceeds with a unified and coordinated endeavour to advance the process of entry by troops, developments of far-reaching significance at the Bahá'í World Centre, foreshadowed in our message of Riḍván 2006 to the Bahá'ís of the world, are now occurring.

The way has been opened to further beautification of the environs of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Qiblih of the people of Bahá, described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the "luminous Shrine" and "the place around which circumambulate the Concourse on high". After negotiations over several years, agreement has been reached with the Israeli government for the acquisition of a rectangular plot of land 90,000 square metres in area, located between Bahjí and the main road, which is currently being used by the government.

The property in the possession of the Faith has been further augmented by the conclusion, after negotiations which extended over some twenty years, of a land exchange with the Israel Land Administration, by which a portion of the land bequeathed to the Faith in the Ein Sara neighbourhood of Nahariya, north of 'Akká, is being exchanged for an additional 100,000 square metres to the east of the Mansion of Bahjí, an area of about

32,000 square metres adjoining the island at the Riḍván Garden, and the caravanserai adjacent to the Mansion of Mazra‘ih. Discussions are continuing with the authorities for a further exchange, using more of the Ein Sara land to acquire additional property in close proximity to the Bahá'í Holy Places in the ‘Akká area required to protect the sanctity and tranquillity of these places in the face of the rapid urbanization of the region.

Measures are now being taken to formulate a comprehensive plan for the development of these Holy Places in the years immediately ahead, in a manner which will preserve the distinctive characteristics evident when Bahá'u'lláh blessed them with His presence, while providing facilities for the growing number of pilgrims and visitors. Work has also been completed on the restoration of the Junayn Gardens, a small farmhouse and orchard north of Bahjí visited occasionally by Bahá'u'lláh, which was subsequently donated to the Faith.

An extensive project is now under way for the restoration of the Riḍván Garden to its condition when visited by Bahá'u'lláh at the termination of His nine-year confinement within the walls of the prison-city of ‘Akká. Described by Him as "Our Verdant Isle" and as the "New Jerusalem", Bahá'u'lláh rejoiced in the tranquillity of the setting, "its streams flowing, and its trees luxuriant, and the sunlight playing in their midst." Included in the work being carried out here is the construction of a circulating water system, which will recreate the island frequented by Bahá'u'lláh, and the restoration of an antique flour mill, which was in use during His time.

No less significant is the work being carried out on Mount Carmel. The International Archives Building, constructed over fifty years ago at a time of limited resources in the Holy Land, is being extensively renovated and its facilities developed. This edifice, described by the Guardian as "the permanent and befitting repository for the priceless and numerous relics associated with the Twin Founders of the Faith, with the Perfect Exemplar of its teachings and with its heroes, saints and martyrs", is being strengthened structurally; provisions are being made to render it accessible to the disabled; the method of display of its relics is being improved; a comprehensive security system is being provided; the exterior stonework is being restored; and its interior is being enhanced through installation of a granite floor.

Detailed plans have been prepared for the renovation of the Shrine of the Báb, the "majestic mausoleum" extolled by Shoghi Effendi as "the Queen of Carmel enthroned on God's Mountain, crowned in glowing gold, robed in shimmering white, girdled in emerald green, enchanting every eye from air, sea, plain and hill.” This work will include installation of earthquake-resistant reinforcement not visible to pilgrims or visitors; preparation of the three chambers not previously available for meditation or worship; repair of the dome; and replacement of its tiles, which have become worn and discoloured, to return them to their pristine lustre.

The work being carried out at the World Centre of the Faith represents far more than repair, renovation, and beautification of buildings and gardens of historic significance. It can best be assessed by reference to Bahá’u’lláh’s designation of Mount Carmel as “the seat of God’s throne” and by recognition of His followers that the Qiblih is the holiest spot on the surface of the planet, while the places in which He found respite are forever sanctified by His presence. From that perspective those who participate in this endeavour, either through their dedicated labours or through their sacrificial contributions of funds, are privileged to an extent far beyond their capacity to comprehend.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

On December 16, 1950, a little over a year after the international recognition of the State of Israel, the mansion at Mazra'a was leased from the Israeli government by the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Bahá'u'lláh lived there from 1877 until 1879, before moving to the Mansion at Bahjí.

The transaction is described in Baha'i News, no. 244, June 1951, p. 4

Masra'ih is a Moslem religious endowment, and it is consequently impossible, under existing laws in this country, for it to be sold. However, as the friends are aware, the Ministry of Religions, due to the direct intervention of the Minister himself, Rabbi Maimon, consented, in the face of considerable opposition, to deliver Masra'ih to the Baha'is as a Holy Place to be visited by Baha'i pilgrims. This means that we rent it from the Department of Moslem and Druze affairs in the Ministry of Religions. The head of this Department is also a Rabbi, Dr. Hirschberg. Recently he, his wife and party, visited all the Baha'i properties in Haifa and 'Akka, following upon a very pleasant tea party in the Western Pilgrim House with the members of the International Baha'i Council.

The mansion at Mazra'a would later be purchased by the Bahá'í Administrative Order from the Israeli government as reported in Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1968-1973, published 1976; Ridván Message 1973, p. 119

The Mansion of Mazra'ih, often referred to by the beloved Guardian as one of the "twin mansions" in which the Blessed Beauty resided after nine years within the walled prison-city of 'Akká, and dear to the hearts of the believers by reason of its associations with their Lord, has at last been purchased together with 24,000 square meters of land extending into the plain on its eastward side.

On March 2, 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Announce to friends of East and West the following: furnishing Mazra'ih, completion of restoration of historic house of Bahá'u'lláh in Acre,[i.e. `Akká] scene of prolonged afflictions sustained by Founder of Faith, as well as supreme crisis suffered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at hands of Covenantbreakers."

Spiritual and Administrative World Center

Announce to friends of East and West the following: furnishing Mazra'ih, completion of restoration of historic house of Bahá'u'lláh in Acre,[i.e. `Akká] scene of prolonged afflictions sustained by Founder of Faith, as well as supreme crisis suffered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at hands of Covenantbreakers. Greatly enhanced international endowments in Holy Land in twin cities of Acre and Haifa, now include twin Holy Shrines situated on plain of Acre and slope of Mount Carmel; twin Mansions of Bahjí and Mazra'ih, twin historic Houses inhabited by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá; twin International Archives adjoining the Báb's Sepulcher and the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf; twin Pilgrim Houses, constructed for Oriental and Occidental pilgrims; twin Gardens of Ridván and Firdaws, associated with the memory of the Author of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Greatly welcome assistance of the newly-formed International Council, particularly its President, Mason Remey, and its Vice-President, Amelia Collins, through contact with authorities designed to spread the fame, consolidate the foundations and widen the scope of influence emanating from the twin spiritual, administrative World Centers permanently fixed in the Holy Land constituting the midmost heart of the entire planet.

[--Shogh]

[Cablegram, March 2, 1951]

On November 12, 1952, a cablegram sent by Shoghi Effendi announced the "acquisition of vitally-needed property" of the Mansion of Bahji and area around it from "the Development Authority of the State of Israel ...The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners."

Acquisition of Vitally-Needed Property

Announce to Bahá'í communities, East and West, on the joyous occasion of the hundred and thirty-fifth Anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's Birthday, the successful termination of the protracted negotiations, initiated two years ago and culminating in the signature to the contract providing **the eventual, formal transfer by the Development Authority of the State of Israel** to the Palestine Branch of the American National Spiritual Assembly of the **extensive, long-desired, vitally-needed property surrounding and safeguarding for posterity the Most Holy Tomb of the Founder of the Faith, as well as the adjoining Mansion.**

The acquired area, raising Bahá'í holdings on the holy plain of &Akka from four thousand to one hundred and fifty-five thousand square meters, was exchanged against property donated by children of Zikrullah, grandchildren of Mírzá Muhammad Quli, Bahá'u'lláh's faithful half-brother and companion in exile.

This spontaneous offer contrasts with the shameful action of the family in the sale to non-Baha'is of the property in the neighborhood of the Jordan valley purchased through the instrumentality of `Abdu'l-Bahá during Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, pursuant to His instructions and alluded to in His writings.

The forty acre property acquired in this single transaction almost equals the entire Bahá'í international endowments purchased in the course of sixty years in the vicinity of the Báb's Sepulcher on the slope of Mount Carmel.

The exchange of said property, including land and houses, was made possible by the precipitate flight of the former Arab owners, traditional supporters of the old Covenant-breakers and descendants of the notorious enemy of `Abdu'l-Bahá who placed his residence at the disposal of the Committee of Investigation.

The signature to the agreement signalized the commencement of large-scale landscaping, aiming at the beautification of the immediate precincts of the holiest spot in the entire Bahá'í world, itself the prelude to the eventual erection, as happened in the case of the Báb's Sepulcher, of a befitting Mausoleum enshrining the precious Dust of the Most Great Name.

Desire to acknowledge the indefatigable efforts exerted by both Larry Hautz and Leroy Ioas enabling the consummation of the initial stage of the enterprise destined to eclipse in its final phase the splendor and magnificence of the Báb's resting-place on Mount Carmel.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, November 12, 1952]

Comments

Original Index: 1485 | Current Position: 87

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1896, UGO GIACHERY, LATER A HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD AND MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL, WAS BORN INTO AN ARISTOCRATIC ITALIAN FAMILY IN PALERMO.

May 13. On this date in 1896, Ugo Giachery, later a Hand of the Cause of God and member of the International Bahá'í Council, was born into an aristocratic Italian family in Palermo.

Giachery became a Bahá'í while living in New York during the interwar period. Giachery moved back to Italy as a pioneer in 1947, and from 1948 onward he became the supplier of marble for the several structures at the Bahá'í World Centre, including the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh next to the Mansion at Bahji, the International Archives Building and the Shrine of the Báb, one of whose doors is named after him as Bab-i-Giachery.

Shoghi Effendi named him a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951 and a member of the International Bahá'í Council in 1952. He was elected chairman of the newly formed Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly in 1953.

On July 5, 1989, Ugo Giachery died while visiting Samoa.

Comments

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1913, HAROLD COLLIS FEATHERSTONE, LATER NAMED A HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD, WAS BORN IN QUORN, AUSTRALIA.

May 13. On this date in 1913, Harold Collis Featherstone, later named a Hand of the Cause of God, was born in Quorn, Australia.

After spending a childhood in Adelaide, Collis Featherstone initially studied accounting but took up engineering in 1932. He worked for a large engineering firm and by the time he married his wife, Madge, in 1938, he was already a partner in an engineering business making pressed metal parts.

The Featherstone converted to the Bahá'í Faith in 1944. From 1949 to 1962, Collis Featherstone served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia.

In 1954 he was appointed as an Auxiliary Board member for Australia by Hand of the Cause of God Clara Dunn.

Shoghi Effendi appointed him a Hand of the Cause of God in October 1957.

He died on September 29, 1990 in Kathmandu, Nepal, while visiting the Bahá'ís there.

Comments

MAY 13, ON THIS DATE IN 1955, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE ALL NSAS THAT BAHÁ'ÍS "MAKE MANY CONTACTS, SELECT A FEW WHOM THEY FEEL WOULD BECOME BAHÁ'ÍS, DEVELOP A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THEM, THEN COMPLETE CONFIDENCE, AND FINALLY TEACH THEM THE FAITH, UNTIL THEY BECOME STRONG SUPPORTERS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD.

Baha'i History - May 13, 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote all NSAs that Bahá'ís "make many contacts, select a few whom they feel would become Bahá'ís, develop a close friendship with them, then complete confidence, and finally teach them the Faith, until they become strong supporters of the Cause of God."

May 13, On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote all NSAs that Bahá'ís "make many contacts, select a few whom they feel would become Bahá'ís, develop a close friendship with them, then complete confidence, and finally teach them the Faith, until they become strong supporters of the Cause of God."

2036. The Most Successful Way for the Individual to Carry on the Teaching Work

"The Bahá'ís must realize that the success of this work depends upon the individual. The individual must arise as never before to proclaim the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The most effective way for them to carry on their work is for the individual to make many contacts, select a few whom they feel would become Bahá'ís, develop a close friendship with them, then complete confidence, and finally teach them the Faith, until they become strong supporters of the Cause of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to all National Spiritual Assemblies, May 13, 1955)

Comments

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1979, THE UHJ WROTE CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING THE DATES GIVEN IN BAHÁ'Í TEXTS FOR THE PROPHET ZOROASTER, STATING "IN ONE OF HIS TABLETS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ STATES THAT ZOROASTER LIVED ABOUT 750 YEARS AFTER MOSES...'ZOROASTER LIVED ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS BEFORE CHRIST.'"

May 13. On this date in 1979, the Universal House of Justice wrote clarifications regarding the dates given in Bahá'í texts for the prophet Zoroaster, stating "in one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that Zoroaster lived about 750 years after Moses. In a letter to an individual believer the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf: 'Zoroaster lived about a thousand years before Christ.'"

Department of the Secretariat

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

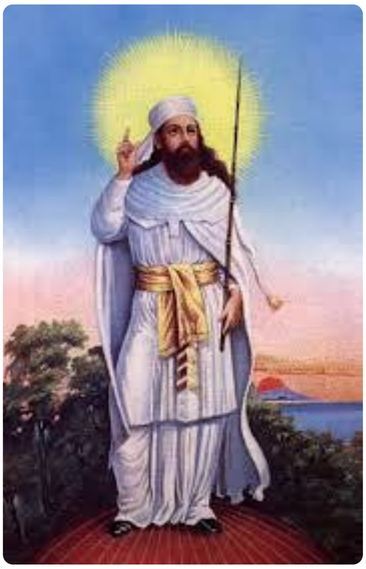
The Universal House of Justice has asked us to convey the following in reply to your letter of April 6 [1979].

1. Regarding the beginning of the Zoroastrian era, in one of His Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that Zoroaster lived about 750 years after Moses. In a letter to an individual believer the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf: "Zoroaster lived about a thousand years before Christ. There is no exact date in the teachings regarding the beginning of His Dispensation."
2. Concerning your second question referring to a purported Tablet of the Bab stating that there were thirty Zoroasters, the Research Department states that no text from the Bab has been found on this subject. However, Mirza Abu'l-Fadl has stated in his writings that there appeared in Iran many prophets prior to the Dispensation of Zoroaster.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

...

For Department of the Secretariat



Comments

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MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1850, THE BABI INSURRECTION IN THE CITY OF ZANJAN BEGAN.

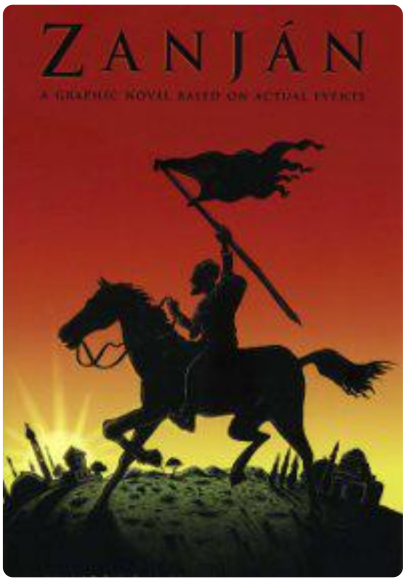
May 13. On this date in 1850, the Babi insurrection in the city of Zanjan began.

On July 21, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i (who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb), under instructions from the Báb, unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis.

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated.

Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad on July 21, 1848, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at thebattle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849.

The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.


ZANJÁN
A GRAPHIC NOVEL BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS

Comments

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1945, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, STATING BAHÁ'ÍS "MUST WHOLE-HEARTEDLY ACCEPT THE ADVICE OR DECISION OF THE ASSEMBLY, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES ALREADY LAID DOWN FOR SUCH MATTERS IN BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION."

May 13. On this date in 1945, Shoghi Effendi wrote the Australian National Spiritual Assembly, stating Bahá'ís "must whole-heartedly accept the advice or decision of the Assembly, according to the principles already laid down for such matters in Bahá'í administration."

13 May 1945 [National Spiritual Assembly]

Dear Bahá'í Sister [Hilda Brooks]:

The beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer your letters dated April 12th, 13th (two) and 14th, and to acknowledge receipt of the enclosures forwarded with them.

Regarding the matter of Mrs Dobbins and the inharmony that seems to exist among certain of the friends in Adelaide: when Bahá'ís permit the dark forces) of the world to enter into their own relationships within the Faith they gravely jeopardise its progress; it is the paramount duty of the believers, the Local Assemblies, and particularly the N.S.A. to foster harmony, understanding and love amongst the friends. All should be ready and willing to set aside every personal sense of grievance - justified or unjustified - for the good of the Cause, because the people will never embrace it until they see in its community life mirrored what is so conspicuously lacking in the world: love and unity.

The Bahá'ís are fully entitled to address criticisms to their Assemblies; they can freely air their views about policies or individual members of elected bodies to the Assembly, local or national, but then they must whole-heartedly accept the advice or decision of the Assembly, according to the principles already laid down for such matters in Bahá'í administration.

Shoghi Effendi has repeatedly stated, to believers in every part of the world, that the individual Bahá'ís are entirely free to write to him on any matter they please; naturally he is equally free to answer them in any manner he pleases. At the present time, when the institutions of the Cause are just beginning to function, he considers it essential to keep up this large correspondence, much as it adds to his many other burdens. It is sometimes the case that the very first intimation he receives of some important step influencing the interests of the Faith, one way or another, comes from an individual's letter instead of from an Assembly; it would naturally be preferable for the information to come from an administrative body, but whatever the source, the Guardian is solely concerned with the welfare of the Faith, and when he deems a certain step detrimental he states his views in his reply. This he is at entire liberty to do.

Just as the National Assembly has full jurisdiction over all its Local Assemblies, the Guardian has full jurisdiction over all National Assemblies; he is not required to consult them, if he believes a certain decision is advisable in the interests of the Cause. He is the judge of the wisdom and advisability of the decisions made by these bodies, and not they of the wisdom and advisability of his decisions. A perusal of the Will and Testament makes this principle quite clear.

He is the Guardian&oldid=745828715) of the Cause in the very fullness of that term, and the appointed interpreter of its teachings, and is guided in his decisions to do that which protects it and fosters its growth and highest interests.

He always has the right to step in and countermand the decisions of a National Assembly; if he did not possess this right he would be absolutely impotent to protect the Faith, just as the N.S.A., if it were divested of the right to countermand the decisions of a Local Assembly, would be incapable of watching over and guiding the national welfare of the Bahá'í community.

It very seldom happens - but it nevertheless does happen - that he feels impelled to change a major (as you put it) decision of an N.S.A.; but he always unhesitatingly does so when necessary, and the N.S.A. in question should gladly and unhesitatingly accept this as a measure designed for the good of the Faith which its elected representatives are so devotedly seeking to serve.

Regarding the position of Summer Schools in Australia: much of what you are at present going through has already been experienced by the American Bahá'í community, and he sympathises with your views and problems; however, he wishes to state the following:

Whatever the history of the Yerrinbool School may be, the fact remains it is now in existence, is owned by believers ready to have it used as such, and is known as a Bahá'í Summer School all over the world. The Guardian is not the least concerned with personalities in this matter, but with principles. He feels at the present time that one Bahá'í Summer School is enough for the believers of Australia to maintain. In the future, as Assemblies and groups multiply, the question will naturally have to be reconsidered.

Bahá'í Summer Schools in the United States originated in the same informal manner as Yerrinbool; they were (and some still are) the property of individual believers who resided on them, but they are administered by Committees appointed by the N.S.A. and which usually include, out of courtesy and consideration, the owners. The American friends also desired to have many more Summer Schools, but the Guardian has so far not permitted them to add to the number, as it dissipates the energy and funds of the believers and would at present weaken those already existing.

He feels that the duty of your Assembly is to not give up Yerrinbool because of any inharmony over it, but to administer and support it properly and remove the inharmony. You should appoint a Committee for the School, purchase any extra equipment needed for the comfort and accommodation of the attendants, and he feels sure the Boltons [Stanley and Mariette] will cooperate with you in this matter, as they are eager to have the property be used by the believers.

Generally speaking he does not encourage the erection of buildings in memory to individual believers at the present time. But as those at Yerrinbool serve a useful purpose and that the memory of dear Father Dunn commemorates the life of the man who brought the Faith to the continent of Australia, we may welcome it in the spirit it was given.

As to what uses should be made of the building purchased by the S.A. of Adelaide, he leaves the decision to your body and that Assembly. He hopes that at a future date it can be used as a Summer School.

It is the duty of the N.S.A. to exercise the greatest wisdom, forbearance and tact in handling the affairs of the Cause. **Many of the differences which arise between the believers are due to their immaturity, their extreme zeal and sincerity.**

He will pray for you all in the Holy Shrines, that the Beloved may assist and strengthen you in the discharge of your sacred duties to the Faith and its adherents in Australia and New Zealand. With Bahá'í Love, R. Rabbani.

Read and approved, Shoghi

For context for the events mentioned in this letter, please read Hilda Brooks and the Australian Bahá'í Community by Graham Hassall...

Between 1941-1944 "Winter Schools" were held annually at Astoria, and early in 1943 - the year in which denial of war-time travel permits prevented Bahá'ís from attending the Yerrinbool Summer School - the Adelaide Bahá'ís purchased a property at Belair:

"We have decided to buy a piece of land", Hilda reported to Gladys Moody of the Sydney Assembly, **"and build a school on it, in the foothills commemorating one of our best panoramic views. We are so thrilled about it. The school will later become a great Bahá'í college. It will be close to Adelaide, close enough to be used all the year around"**.

This was not a vision shared by the Guardian. His instruction that the property be sold brought an impassioned response from Hilda:

"Beloved Guardian", she cabled at length on 4 October 1943, **"have you received my letter June 8 correctly explaining purpose Belair property, great teaching enterprise, Bahá'í centre from which extend to country districts Adelaide Assembly's unanimous decision eager support nearly all believers, National Assembly fully approved, encouraged and assisted stop summer school secondary consideration, main purpose centre, weekly meetings, spreading out stop cost travelling Adelaide Yerrinbool would soon pay for property, very few believers able to attend Yerrinbool expense distance so great travel permits unobtainable stop Adelaide Assembly's enthusiasm extinguished effort paralysed sacrifice wasted unless you are pleased humbly beg reassuring message if project has your approval as assembly deeply disappointed letter to Mrs Dobbins. heartfelt love hilda brooks".**

The Adelaide Bahá'ís were to learn that Shoghi Effendi's plans were resolute. He repeated in letters in 1944-45 his desire that the Australian community support just one Summer School:

Whatever the history of the Yerrinbool School may be, the fact remains it is now in existence, is owned by believers ready to have it used as such, and is known as the Bahá'í Summer School all over the world. The Guardian is not the least concerned with personalities in this matter, but with principles. He feels at the present time that one Bahá'í Summer School is enough for the believers of Australia to

maintain. In the future, as assemblies and groups multiply, the question will naturally have to be reconsidered.

This correspondence occurred in the context of much protest from the Adelaide Bahá'ís, who felt that the saving in transport costs to and from Summer Schools at Yerrinbool would more than pay for a property in Adelaide. Shoghi Effendi's considerations, however, were not merely financial. He was concerned that the Bahá'ís develop a truly corporate, not parochial or regional, identity.

1943 also brought other turbulent events. Although the National Assembly's office bearers had been located in Adelaide since 1934 - Hilda Brooks as secretary, Silver Jackman as treasurer, and Robert Brown as chairman - the Guardian requested in July 1943 that a national centre be purchased in Sydney, which he described as the continent's "mother city". After a complicated search, a two-story house was purchased in 1944, at 2 Lang Road, Paddington. When some Bahá'ís expressed the view that the National secretary had to be in residence, and despite Shoghi Effendi's reassurance that the transfer of administrative offices from Adelaide to Sydney could be gradual, the view prevailed that, because the Headquarters was the seat of the secretariat, the National Secretary should be in residence. At the 1944 National Convention Dulcie Dive was elected secretary, and transferred her residence from Auckland to Sydney. Hilda Brooks remained on the National Assembly but her service as secretary was at an end. Her involvement in national Bahá'í issues, however, was not.

Hilda Brooks retired from the National Assembly in 1948.

Comments

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, ‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ SAID "... THEY SHALL GLORIFY THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, SAYING ... THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WAS THE CENTURY OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE, THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WAS THE CENTURY OF DIVINE BESTOWALS, AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HAS LEFT TRACES WHICH SHALL LAST FOREVER."

May 13. On this date in 1912, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk to the New York Peace Society where he said "Let this century be the sun of previous centuries, the effulgences of which shall last forever, so that in times to come they shall glorify the twentieth century, saying the twentieth century was the century of lights, the twentieth century was the century of life, the twentieth century was the century of international peace, the twentieth century was the century of divine bestowals, and the twentieth century has left traces which shall last forever."

Talk given 13 May 1912

Talk at Reception by New York Peace Society

Hotel Astor, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

Although I felt indisposed this afternoon, yet because I attach great importance to this assembly and was longing to see your faces, I have come. The expression of kindly feelings and the spirit of hospitality manifested by the former speakers are most grateful. I am thankful for the susceptibilities of your hearts, for it is an evidence that your greatest desire is the establishment of international peace. You are lovers of the oneness of humanity, seekers after the good pleasure of the Lord, investigators of the foundations of the divine religions.

Today there is no greater glory for man than that of service in the cause of the Most Great Peace. Peace is light, whereas war is darkness. Peace is life; war is death. Peace is guidance; war is error. Peace is the foundation of God; war is a satanic institution. Peace is the illumination of the world of humanity; war is the destroyer of human foundations. When we consider outcomes in the world of existence, we find that peace and fellowship are factors of upbuilding and betterment, whereas war and strife are the causes of destruction and disintegration. All created things are expressions of the affinity and cohesion of elementary substances, and nonexistence is the absence of their attraction and agreement. Various elements unite harmoniously in composition, but when these elements become discordant, repelling each other, decomposition and nonexistence result. Everything partakes of this nature and is subject to this principle, for the creative foundation in all its degrees and kingdoms is an expression or outcome of love. Consider the restlessness and agitation of the human world today because of war. Peace is health and construction; war is disease and dissolution. When the banner of truth is raised, peace becomes the cause of the welfare and advancement of the human world. In all cycles and ages war has been a factor of derangement and discomfort, whereas peace and brotherhood have brought security and consideration of human interests. This distinction is especially pronounced in the present world conditions, for warfare in former centuries had not attained the degree of savagery and destructiveness which now characterizes it. If two nations were at war in olden times, ten or twenty thousand would be sacrificed, but in this century the destruction of one hundred thousand lives in a day is quite possible. So perfected has the science of killing become and so efficient the means and instruments of its accomplishment that a whole nation can be obliterated in a short time. Therefore, comparison with the methods and results of ancient warfare is out of the question.

According to an intrinsic law all phenomena of being attain to a summit and degree of consummation, after which a new order and condition is established. As the instruments and science of war have reached the degree of thoroughness and proficiency, it is hoped that the transformation of the human world is at hand and that in the coming centuries all the energies and inventions of man will be utilized in promoting the interests of peace and brotherhood. Therefore, may this esteemed and worthy society for the establishment of international peace be confirmed in its sincere intentions and empowered by God. Then will it hasten the time when the banner of universal agreement will be raised and international welfare will be proclaimed and consummated so that the darkness which now encompasses the world shall pass away.

Sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh was in Persia. Seventy years ago the Báb appeared there. These two Blessed Souls devoted Their lives to the foundation of international peace and love among mankind. They strove with heart and soul to establish the teachings by which divergent people might be brought together and no strife, rancor or hatred prevail. Bahá'u'lláh, addressing all humanity, said that Adam, the parent of mankind, may be likened to the tree of nativity upon which you are the leaves and blossoms. Inasmuch as your origin was one, you must now be united and agreed; you must consort with each other in joy and fragrance. He pronounced prejudice--whether religious, racial, patriotic, political--the destroyer of the body politic. He said that man must recognize the oneness of humanity, for all in origin belong to the same household, and all are servants of the same God. Therefore, mankind must continue in the state of fellowship and love, emulating the institutions of God and turning away from satanic promptings, for the divine bestowals bring forth unity and agreement, whereas satanic leadings induce hatred and war.

This remarkable Personage was able by these principles to establish a bond of unity among the differing sects and divergent people of Persia. Those who followed His teachings, no matter from what denomination or faction they came, were conjoined by the ties of love, until now they cooperate and live together in peace and agreement. They are real brothers and sisters. No distinctions of class are observed among them, and complete harmony prevails. Daily this bond of affinity is strengthening, and their spiritual fellowship continually develops. In order to ensure the progress of mankind and to establish these principles Bahá'u'lláh suffered every ordeal and difficulty. The Báb became a martyr, and over twenty thousand men and women sacrificed their lives for their faith. Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned and subjected to severe persecutions. Finally, He was exiled from Persia to Mesopotamia; from Baghdád He was sent to Constantinople and Adrianople and from thence to the prison of `Akká in Syria. Through all these ordeals He strove day and night to proclaim the oneness of humanity and promulgate the message of universal peace. From the prison of &Akka He addressed the kings and rulers of the earth in lengthy letters, summoning them to international agreement and explicitly stating that the standard of the Most Great Peace would surely be upraised in the world.

This has come to pass. The powers of earth cannot withstand the privileges and bestowals which God has ordained for this great and glorious century. It is a need and exigency of the time. Man can withstand anything except that which is divinely intended and indicated for the age and its requirements. Now--praise be to God!--in all countries of the world, lovers of peace are to be found, and these principles are being spread among mankind, especially in this country. Praise be to God! This thought is prevailing, and souls are continually arising as defenders of the oneness of humanity, endeavoring to assist and establish international peace. There is no doubt that this wonderful democracy will be able to realize it, and the banner of international agreement will be unfurled here to spread onward and outward among all the nations of the world. I give thanks to God that I find you imbued with such susceptibilities and lofty aspirations, and I hope that you will be the means of spreading this light to all men. Thus may the Sun of Reality shine upon the East and West. The enveloping clouds shall pass away, and the heat of the divine rays will dispel the mist. The reality of man shall develop and come forth as the image of God, his Creator. The thoughts of man shall take such upward flight that former accomplishments shall appear as the play of children, for the ideas and beliefs of the past and the prejudices regarding race and religion have ever lowered and been destructive to human evolution. I am most hopeful that in this century these lofty thoughts shall be conducive to human welfare. **Let this century be the sun of previous centuries, the effulgences of which shall last forever, so that in times to come they shall glorify the twentieth century, saying the twentieth century was the century of lights, the twentieth century was the century of life, the twentieth century was the century of international peace, the twentieth century was the century of divine bestowals, and the twentieth century has left traces which shall last forever.**

On March 10, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' gave a talk in Paris, later published as "The Day of God" in *Bahá'í Scriptures: Selections from the Utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá'*, during which he states "This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God. This is the Day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the Day when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the Day in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the Day in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century."

THE DAY OF GOD

Do you know in what Day you are living? Do you realize in what Dispensation you are alive? Have you not heard in the Holy Scriptures that at the consummation of the ages there shall appear a Day which is the Sun of all the past Days? This is the Day in which the Lord of Hosts has come down from heaven on the clouds of glory! This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God.

This is the Day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the Day when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the Day in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the Day in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century.

This Day is the dawn of the appearances of the traces of the glorious vision of the past prophets and sages.

Now is the dawn; ere long the effulgent Sun shall rise and station itself in the meridian of its majesty. Then you shall observe the effects of the Sun. Then you shall behold what heavenly illumination has become manifest. Then you shall comprehend that these are the infinite bestowals of God! Then you shall see that this world has become another world. Then you shall perceive that the Teachings of God have universally spread.

Rest ye assured that this darkness shall be dispelled and these impenetrable clouds which have darkened the horizon shall be scattered, and the Sun of Reality shall appear in its full splendor. Its rays shall melt the icebergs of hatred and differences which have transformed the moving sea of humanity into hard frozen immensity. The vices of the world of nature shall be changed into praiseworthy attributes, and the lights of the excellencies of the Divine realm shall appear.

The principles of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, like unto the spirit, shall penetrate the dead body of the world, and the Love of God, like unto an artery, shall beat through the heart of the five continents.

The East shall become illumined, the West perfumed, and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity.

In this Day the rest of the people are asleep. Praise be to God that you are awakened! They are all uninformed, but praise be to God you are informed of the mysteries of God! Thank ye God that in this arena you have preceded others. I hope that each one of you may become a pillar of the palace of the oneness of the world of humanity. May each one of you become a luminous star of this heaven, thus lighting the path of those who are seeking the goal of human perfection.

Paris, France

March 10, 1913.

In 1954 Ramona Allen Brown made a Bahá'í pilgrimage during which Shoghi Effendi told her "Please share your notes that you have taken here with the friends when you return home" including such statements as "It is not enough to be good and kind and to lead a religious life today; it does not count for much unless one accepts the Manifestation of God, if one has heard of Him; it is almost wasted. One must accept the Manifestation in His day"; "All men are not of the same capacity"; "Every city, every town, and every village will have a [Bahá'í] Temple and a House of Justice in the future"; and **"It is essential that the youth of today study deeply the Faith as they will usher in the Most Great Peace. The Lesser Peace will be established within this century. The Most Great Peace in the next century"**

On April 19, 2001, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter regarding "the timing for the occurrence of the Lesser Peace, in light of your impression that the Bahá'í Writings anticipate its coming before the conclusion of the twentieth century; i.e., the end of December 2000."

Comments

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1976, DORIS RICHARDSON, WHO SERVED ON THE FIRST NSA OF CANADA AND WAS NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR PIONEERING TO GRAND MANAN ISLAND, DIED.

May 13. On this date in 1976, Doris Richardson, who served on the first NSA of Canada and was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for pioneering to Grand Manan Island, died.

Doris Richardson was born in 1901 in Ontario. When she was sixteen she married Mr. Richardson, an American from a strong Catholic family. She investigated Christian Science in her youth.

She was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Howard Colby Ives and Mabel Ives, and became a Bahá'í in 1939. She moved to Scarborough, Ontario, and was a member of the cities first Local Spiritual Assembly, and she held firesides every Saturday which became the center of teaching activity. She served on the first Teaching Committee of Ontario and traveled to visit communities across the Province throughout the 1940's, and she also traveled to other parts of Canada, teaching at the Maritime Summer School in 1947. In 1948 she was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Canada.

In 1951 she pioneered to the Maritime region of Canada and served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Moncton, New Brunswick. At the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade in 1953 she pioneered to Grand Manan Island for which she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. She managed a summer hotel, the Marathon Inn, on the island from 1953 to 1974 and later became a girls' school matron.

In 1957 the first Grand Manan Island local declared due to Doris's teaching. In 1958 she attended an Intercontinental Bahá'í Conference in Chicago and wrote an article about it which was published in a local Grand Manan paper, the first article on the Faith published in the area.

Doris passed away due to cancer on Grand Manan in 1976. The Universal House of Justice conveyed the following message after her passing:

ASSURE PRAYERS SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM KNIGHT BAHAULLAH DORIS RICHARDSON HER DEVOTED SERVICES CAUSE ENRICH ANNALS FAITH CANADA.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

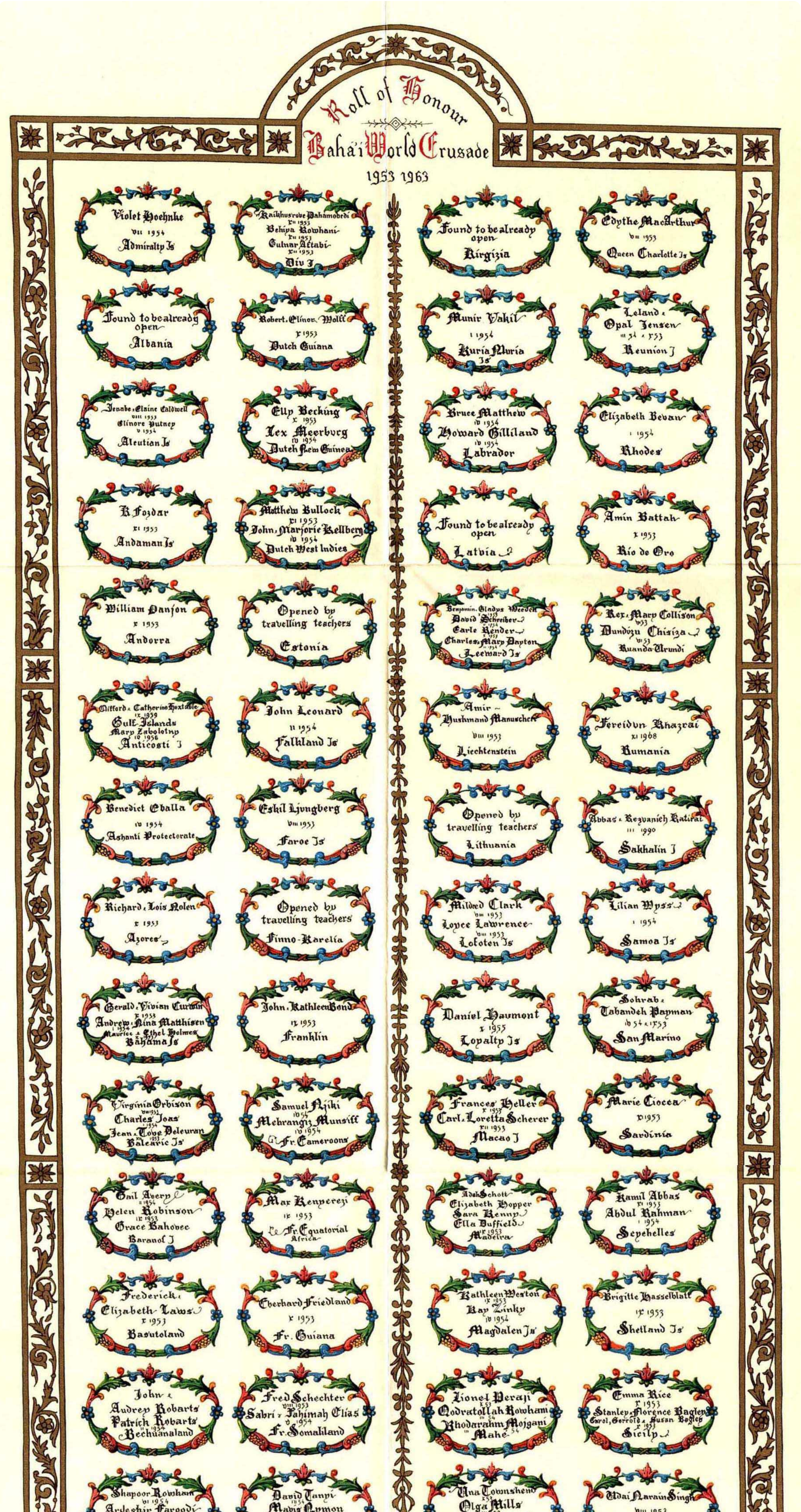
Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island, Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.



Roll of Honour
Baha'i World Crusade
1953 1963

Violet Hoehnke
vii 1954
Admiralty Is

Found to be already open
Albania

Jenabe & Elaine Caldwell
viii 1953
Elinore Putney
v 1954
Aleutian Is

K Fozdar
xi 1953
Andaman Is

William Danjon
x 1953
Andorra

Clifford & Catherine Huxtable
ix 1959
Gulf Islands
Mary Zabolotny
iv 1956
Anticosti I

Benedict Eballa
iv 1954
Ashanti Protectorate

Richard & Lois Nolen
x 1953
Azores

Gerald & Vivian Curwin
x 1953
Andrew & Nina Matthisen
i 1954
Maurice & Ethel Holmes
x 1953
Bahama Is

Virginia Orbison
viii 1953
Charles Joas
i 1954
Jean & Tove Deleuran
xii 1953
Balearic Is

Gail Avery
ii 1954
Helen Robinson
ix 1953
Grace Bahovec
Baranof I

Frederick &
Elizabeth Laws
x 1953
Basutoland

John &
Audrey Robarts
Patrick Robarts
ii 1954
Bechuanaland

Shapoor Rowhani
vi 1954
Ardeshir Faroodi

Kaikhusrove Dahamobedi
xii 1953
Behiya Rowhani
xii 1953
Gulnar Aftabi
xii 1953
Diu I

Robert & Elinor Wolff
x 1953
Dutch Guiana

Elly Becking
x 1953
Lex Meerburg
iv 1954
Dutch New Guinea

Matthew Bullock
xi 1953
John & Marjorie Kellberg
iv 1954
Dutch West Indies

Opened by travelling teachers
Estonia

John Leonard
ii 1954
Falkland Is

Eskil Ljungberg
viii 1953
Faroe Is

Opened by travelling teachers
Finno-Karelia

John & Kathleen Bond
ix 1953
Franklin

Samuel Njiki
1954
Mehrangiz Munsiff
iv 1954
Fr. Cameroons

Max Kenyerezi
ix 1953
Fr. Equatorial Africa

Eberhard Friedland
x 1953
Fr. Guiana

Fred Schechter
viii 1953
Sabri & Fahimah Elias
v 1954
Fr. Somaliland

David Tanyi
1954
Mavis Nymon

Found to be already open
Kirgizia

Munir Vakil
i 1954
Kuria Muria Is

Bruce Matthew
iv 1954
Howard Gilliland
iv 1954
Labrador

Found to be already open
Latvia

Benjamin & Gladys Weeden
x 1955
David Schreiber
v 1954
Earle Render
x 1953
Charles & Mary Dayton
ii 1954
Leeward Is

Amir-Hushmand Manuchehri
viii 1953
Liechtenstein

Opened by travelling teachers
Lithuania

Mildred Clark
viii 1953
Joyce Lawrence
viii 1953
Lofoten Is

Daniel Haumont
x 1955
Loyalty Is

Frances Heller
x 1953
Carl & Loretta Scherer
xii 1953
Macao I

Ada Schott
Elizabeth Hopper
Sara Kenny
Ella Duffield
ix 1953
Madeira

Kathleen Weston
ix 1953
Kay Zinky
iv 1954
Magdalen Is

Lionel Peraji
x 53
Qodratollah Rowhani
iii 54
Khodarahm Mojgani
iii 54
Mahé

Una Townshend
x 53
Olga Mills

Edythe MacArthur
viii 1953
Queen Charlotte Is

Leland &
Opal Jensen
iii 54 & x 53
Reunion I

Elizabeth Bevan
i 1954
Rhodes

Amin Battah
x 1953
Rio de Oro

Rex & Mary Collison
i 53
Dunduzu Chisiza
vi 53
Ruanda-Urundi

Fereidun Khazrai
xi 1968
Rumania

Abbas & Rezvanieh Katirai
iii 1990
Sakhalin I

Lilian Wyss
i 1954
Samoa Is

Sohrab &
Tabandeh Payman
iv 54 & ix 53
San Marino

Marie Ciocca
x 1953
Sardinia

Kamil Abbas
xi 1953
Abdul Rahman
i 1954
Seychelles

Brigitte Hasselblatt
ix 1953
Shetland Is

Emma Rice
x 1953
Stanley & Florence Bagley
Carol, Gerrold & Susan Bagley
x 1953
Sicily

Udai Narain Singh
viii 1953

Comments

MAY 13. ON THIS DATE IN 1986, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE TO THE SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF GUADELOUPE REGARDING "TRANSLATIONS INTO FRENCH OR CREOLE USING SIMPLER WORDS THAN THE ORIGINAL TEXT"

May 13. On this date in 1986, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the Spiritual Assembly of Guadeloupe regarding "translations into French or Creole using simpler words than the original text"

370. Translation of Bahá'í Literature into Everyday Language-- Simplifications and Paraphrasing Not to be Published as Scripture

"The Universal House of Justice, in response to your letter of 20 April concerning translations into French or Creole using simpler words than the original text, has requested us to send the following three quotations. These make it clear that a quotation in English may be rendered into simple English in order to facilitate its translation into another language or dialect. However, it is not permissible to publish simplifications and paraphrased extracts of Bahá'í Writings as Bahá'í Scripture.

'We have noticed a tendency in a number of countries to attempt to translate Bahá'í literature into the current, easy, everyday language of the country. This, however, should not be an overriding consideration. Many of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá are in exalted and highly poetic language in the original Persian and Arabic and you will see, for example, that when translating Bahá'u'lláh's Writings into English the beloved Guardian did not use present-day colloquial English but evolved a highly poetic and beautiful style, using numbers of archaic expressions reminiscent of the translations of the Bible.' (From a letter dated 7 October 1973 written by the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

'Obviously teaching literature and books about the Faith can be written in simple English. However, we feel that when the Sacred Writings are published the standard English translation should be used, but there would be no objection to printing alongside it the translation into simple English which should be described as a paraphrase of the Holy Word. Thus, for the people of ... who have difficulty in comprehending standard English, the simple English version would be in the nature of an explanation of the Writings which they could understand. In the case of teaching literature in which quotations from the Writings appear, these could either be paraphrased or a simple English version could be used with the standard version printed as a footnote. This method would also provide a means whereby the people of ... could improve their knowledge and understanding of the English language.' (From a letter dated 20 September 1973 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

'It is, of course, permissible to translate Bahá'í Writings into other languages and dialects of languages. It is also possible to simplify or paraphrase the Bahá'í Writings in order to facilitate their translation into languages and dialects having small vocabularies. However, it is not permissible to publish simplifications and paraphrases of Bahá'í Writings as Bahá'í Scripture.'" (From a letter dated 13 March 1969 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the Spiritual Assembly of Guadeloupe, May 13, 1986)

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into non-English "European languages."

English works can be translated into non-English "European languages."

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

بولی
Sprache
Język
اللغة
لسان
Lenguaje
Bahasa
言語
Ngôn ngữ
Linguaggio
Wika
언어
Language
Langage
भाषा

Comments

Original Index: 1478 | Current Position: 96

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 14, 2008, MEMBERS OF THE YARAN, AN AD HOC ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP FORMED BY THE BAHA'I ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER IN IRAN, WERE ARRESTED. ON AUGUST 29, 1983 THE GOVERNMENT HAD BANNED ALL BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES, REQUIRING THE DISSOLUTION OF ABOUT 400 LSAS AND THE NSA.

May 14. On this date in 2008, members of the Yaran, an ad hoc administrative group formed by the Baha'i Administrative Order in Iran, were arrested. On August 29, 1983 the government had banned all Bahá'í administrative activities, requiring the dissolution of about 400 Local Spiritual Assemblies and the National Spiritual Assembly.

Comments

MAY 14. ON THIS DATE IN 2009, EXACTLY ONE YEAR TO THE DATE OF THE ARREST OF THE YARAN, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO IRANIAN BELIEVERS.

May 14. On this date in 2009, exactly one year to the date of the arrest of the Yaran, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Iranian believers.

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

14 May 2009

To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

Dearly loved Friends,

A year has now passed since the former members of the Yárán were arrested. Despite what has been reported in Iran's state-run media, the people of your nation and others throughout the world have become increasingly convinced of their innocence and, indeed, of the innocence of all Bahá'ís. A review of the events associated with the imprisonment of these seven dearly loved friends, so representative of the pattern of persecution established against the Bahá'ís of Iran, exposes a shameless travesty of justice.

The members of the Yárán were summarily arrested and subjected to intensive interrogation with no recourse to legal counsel. In an effort to construct a case against them, the authorities seized and questioned those with whom they worked closely. A full seven months elapsed before even a single pretext could be furnished for their detention. Finally, on 11 February 2009, a series of baseless charges were levelled against them, each an obvious distortion of their irreproachable efforts to tend to the needs of the Bahá'í community. Their routine correspondence with the Universal House of Justice on matters such as the difficulties facing Bahá'ís was presented as "espionage for Israel"; their allegiance to the Faith was portrayed as an insult to Islam; and their service as members of the Yárán—a group with which various agencies of the government had maintained regular contact for some twenty years—was denounced as illegal.

The authorities then proceeded to exploit the official media to condemn the Yárán in the eyes of the public. An immediate worldwide outcry made it clear to the authorities that any trial would not escape intense international scrutiny, compelling them to replace the examining magistrate. Now, some twelve weeks after the reported conclusion of investigations, the families of the Yárán have been informed that a new accusation has been levelled at the prisoners: “spreading corruption on earth” (Mufṣid-i-fil-arḍ). Such a charge can leave no doubt that the only basis for the allegations made against the Yárán is to be found in religious prejudice.

The past year has also seen an increase in the pressure brought to bear on your community as a whole. You have endured acts of violence and summary arrests and aggressive interrogations, experienced growing attempts at the coercion of young students and continued denial of higher education, and suffered economic sanctions and other privations. The ad hoc arrangements made for addressing the spiritual and social needs of the believers—the Yárán and the Khádimín—were declared illegal, and in demonstration of your sincerity as loyal, law-abiding citizens, you brought to a close their collective functioning. Yet every instance of injustice has served only to sharpen the contrast between your sincere intent and the deepseated prejudice of those who persist in their assaults against you, a contrast that has not gone unnoticed by observers, either within or outside your country.

Support from progressive Iranian thinkers and from others in both the East and the West who champion the cause of justice grows stronger with every day that passes, and the call for the protection of your civil rights resounds ever louder. Surely you are aware of the many articles and statements issued by prominent and influential Iranians in your defence over the past few months. Similar concern has been voiced by individuals and representatives of organizations and governments in all parts of the world. Recent action taken by the Canadian House of Commons provides a noteworthy example of the recognition accorded to all fair-minded people of your country, on the one hand, and the outspoken condemnation of the persecution you are forced to bear, on the other. For an hour and a half on the evening of 30 March 2009, members of Parliament, representing every one of the country’s political parties, rose in the House of Commons and spoke of your plight with eloquence and passion. While acknowledging the distinguished role your nation has played in the advance of civilization and expressing esteem for the people of Iran and admiration for the Bahá’ís, regarded as compassionate and conciliatory, they lamented the harm caused to your country by those who persecute you and your fellow citizens. By unanimous consent they adopted a motion which “condemns the ongoing persecution of the Bahá’í minority of Iran and calls upon the government of Iran to reconsider its charges against the members of the Friends in Iran, and release them immediately or failing this, that it proceed to trial without further delay, ensuring that the proceedings are open and fair and are conducted in the presence of international observers."

Parallel to such developments, news of the efforts you are making to accommodate recent changes, to manage the affairs of the community, and to pursue without interruption your collective endeavours has been a constant source of encouragement to us. We are in receipt of numerous communications from across Iran, forwarded here through both your friends and Bahá'í institutions outside of the country, that point to your unwavering resolve. This correspondence raises many questions, some of which we will address in a separate response in the coming days; it also testifies to the determination with which you are discharging your individual spiritual responsibilities, are providing for the spiritual education of all members of your community irrespective of age, are cooperating with your fellow citizens to further the social and economic development of Iran, and are engaging in constructive discussions with your neighbours, friends, relatives, and co-workers. We offer gratitude to God that your lives have become a reflection of the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Man's honour and glory lie in purity, truthfulness, benevolence, virtue and constancy, not in earthly vanities and riches. Should a soul succeed in rendering a signal service to the world of humanity, and in particular to the land of Persia, he will be exalted above the most exalted and will be accounted as the greatest of the great ones. This, indeed, is abounding riches! This, indeed, is abundant treasure! This, indeed, is everlasting wealth!

Among the communications you have sent are many kind expressions of sentiment, written for the occasions of Naw-Rúz and Riḍván. We reciprocate warmest greetings to each and every one of you, extending our very best wishes for a year filled with opportunities to serve your country and your compatriots. May the coming year witness, by the grace of God, the dawning of the sun of justice in your homeland, that the darkness of adversity may be dispelled and the horizon of peace and prosperity open before you and your people.

Dear friends: It is known to every person of insight that those who sow the seeds of dissension will ultimately reap the bitter fruit. Calumny and lies, employed toward dishonourable ends, will result only in the erosion of public trust. The mass of the people, observing with discernment the acts against you, will cease, in the end, to be misled by such deception and will be compelled instead to examine the true character of your beliefs and aspirations. So it is that the air now reverberates with the outcry for the protection of your civil rights, raised by fair-minded Iranians in schools and universities and throughout the various sectors of society.

With these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá we beseech Divine assistance on your behalf:

O Divine Providence! Bestow Thine aid and vouchsafe Thine assistance. Dispel this darksome cloud and disperse this obscuring mist. Waft Thy life-giving breezes and quicken the lifeless hearts. Rain down the showers of Thy mercy and refresh this withered plant. Cause the bowers of human hearts to become the gardens of the all-glorious Paradise and the realities of human souls to become the meadows of the Concourse on high.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

MAY 14. ON THIS DATE IN 2011, ON THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARREST OF THE YARAN, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO IRANIAN BELIEVERS.

May 14. On this date in 2011, on the third anniversary of the arrest of the Yaran, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Iranian believers.

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

14 May 2011

To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

Dearly loved friends

The third anniversary of the imprisonment of the former members of the Yárán serves as a reminder of the difficult conditions that continue to afflict the Bahá'í community of Iran. The perpetuation of so egregious a situation—its underlying foundations and its far-reaching implications for the future of a country once a standard-bearer of human rights—gives Iranians everywhere cause for reflection.

That the seven former members of the Yárán are, in truth, prisoners of conscience is today incontrovertible. Repeated reference to these seven in the world's media stands as a mark of protest by so many nations against the wrongs being perpetrated upon the Bahá'ís of Iran, young and old, solely on the basis of their religious belief: the children who are constantly demeaned and disparaged in the classroom and who are left with no choice but, in all meekness, to defend their human dignity; the parents who, filled with sadness, must explain to them such inhumane treatment while preventing the seeds of resentment and hatred from taking root in their innocent hearts; the youth who are deprived of higher education and their parents who are themselves denied employment and professional opportunities and who must bear the further burden of being unable to meet the needs of their children; the scores of individuals who have committed no wrong yet, contrary to all legal norms, are arrested, harshly interrogated, incarcerated in the most vile jails and denied the most basic rights accorded to every prisoner; the families that, because of the severe threats made by security agents against those who associate with Bahá'ís, must circumscribe relationships with neighbours and friends; the rank and file of the

Bahá'í community that must endure a life of perpetual uncertainty as a result of the widespread dissemination by the authorities of hateful and offensive propaganda against the Faith in the mass media; and the many believers who, in cities and villages throughout Iran, are made to witness the burning of their homes, farms, and places of work, and even the desecration of the graves of their loved ones. Yet all pleas for redress remain unheard.

Bahá'ís, of course, are not alone in their plight. Many other noble-minded men and women of Iran, deprived of their rights and subjected to injustices, have likewise accepted to bear countless hardships. With admirable courage, they have faced the direst iniquities, refusing to bow before the demands of ignorant prejudice and baseless superstition—this, in the defence of freedom and human rights and, ultimately, for the progress and prosperity of their nation.

The constructive resilience you have displayed is not lost on the attentive observer, nor are its powerful effects. Consider how over the past three years, though deprived of the guidance of the Yárán and the Khádimín, the Bahá'í community has continued, as a result of the exertions made by each one of you and with the aid of heavenly confirmations, to manage its affairs; how the scope of individual initiative has widened and group consultation has yielded such abundant fruit; how every one of you, whether in spacious environs or in the narrow confines of prison, has shone brightly, even as a candle lit by the hand of the Almighty, shedding the light of hope and love on all those in your midst; how the unity of the community, the solidarity of its members and their ability to attend to one another's needs have increased; how their relations with friends and co-workers have flourished; how their dynamism as a community in service to others has risen; and how the contingents of those attracted to the Beloved have continued to expand. **Not only have the many hardships you have borne been instrumental in awakening the conscience of the noble people of Iran, but the Bahá'í community worldwide, reinforced by the energies released through your sacrifices, has seen a significant increase in its capacity to contribute to the spiritual empowerment of people, enabling them to take charge of their own spiritual, social and material development. Moreover, growing numbers, particularly those in the younger generations, have been moved to study the fundamental verities of the Faith, and their desire to take part in the great enterprise upon which the Bahá'í world is embarked has intensified accordingly.**

By the same token, the spurious character of the accusations levelled at Bahá'ís by fanatical elements has now been made plain, both in Iran and elsewhere. The hopes of long-standing avowed enemies of the Faith to undermine the foundations of the community of the Most Great Name in the land of its birth have been dashed, and the words and deeds of the country's officials been discredited in the eyes of the public. Meanwhile, persecution has spread to the general populace; brutality and oppression have become so pervasive as to leave no citizen untouched. To all appearances, government officials remain wholly ignorant of the truth, borne out by history, that injustice and oppression can never assure any regime's ultimate survival. Examine how the ideas and aspirations of individuals have been ignored and their human rights constantly trampled. It is as though the well-being, the progress, and the happiness of the people are of the least concern to the authorities. The painful consequences of these atrocities are all too clear. In His weighty Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh, the distinguished Son of that land, calls on the rulers of the world to become the embodiments of justice and fairness, cautions them to guard against placing their reliance on wealth, power, and armies, and exhorts them to desist from tyranny. He reminds them that the true treasure of every nation is its people and admonishes them to beware, lest they deliver their sacred trust to the hands of the robber. Those in authority, He declares, would do well to choose for their people that which they choose for themselves, to eschew pride and vainglory, to avoid expending the wealth of the nation for their personal satisfaction, to refrain from imposing hardships upon their people, and to fear the sighs and lamentations of the oppressed. Should they so act, Bahá'u'lláh affirms, no need to amass weapons of war will remain; freedom, peace and tranquillity will be established, and their countries and their people will attain true prosperity.

The hope expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and cherished by every Bahá'í, is that Iran will evince those noble qualities which will "bring immortality to all on earth" and "raise on the highest summits the banner of public order, of purest spirituality, of universal peace." It is this spiritual vision that enables you, despite the hardships and strictures imposed upon you, to remain so ardent in your desire to serve that land. Therefore, keep fixed before your eyes God's consummate wisdom and His unfailing promises; look to the future with optimism; dedicate your lives, as you have always done, to serving humanity; continue to fulfil your individual spiritual responsibilities; engage in meaningful conversation in those social spaces open to you; and participate, to the extent possible, in undertakings and efforts directed towards the common good. Pursue with confidence the path you have chosen, and rest assured that, in the fortitude and endurance you display in the face of such trials and afflictions, you walk in the footsteps of the beloved Master.

We offer supplications in the Holy Shrines on behalf of each and every one of you, calling to mind these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

The friends of Iran are dearer to me than life and soul, for in the path of God they have suffered severe trials, sustained grievous afflictions, seen their homes plundered, become the target of the slings and arrows of rebuke and reproach, offered up their very lives, and emerged from the crucible of trials and tribulations radiant as pure gold. Thus, in the estimation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá they are more precious than life itself, and before the Concourse on high they are the object of honour and esteem. Shouldst thou come upon any of these souls, embrace and kiss that pure being on my behalf, that my soul may find boundless delight and my heart be wholly rejoiced.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

MAY 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1997, AN NSA WROTE THE UHJ "REQUESTING GUIDANCE CONCERNING THE ATTENTION GIVEN BY THE FRIENDS TO POSTINGS BY COVENANT-BREAKERS ON THE INTERNET" WHO NOTED "IT IS CLOSELY FOLLOWING THIS ISSUE..SITES MAINTAINED BY COVENANT-BREAKER GROUPS WILL HAVE A DIMINISHING IMPACT.."

May 14. On this date in 1997, an NSA wrote the Universal House of Justice "requesting guidance concerning the attention given by the friends to postings by Covenant-breakers on the Internet" who noted "it is closely following this issue...a large and ever-expanding body of authentic material on the Faith, attractively presented and illustrated. Sites maintained by Covenant-breaker groups will have a diminishing impact in the context of the information deluge on the Internet and against the background of the authorized Bahá'í source now accessible."

Your faxed message dated 14 May 1997, requesting guidance concerning the attention given by the friends to postings by Covenant-breakers on the Internet, was received by the Universal House of Justice and referred to our Department for reply. The House of Justice is aware of the electronic postings on the Internet by Covenant-breakers. While it is closely following this issue, it sees no cause for undue concern. "The Bahá'í World", a Web site developed by the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information, was launched in July 1996. It, together with a range of specialized Bahá'í Internet presentations such as the new "One Country" site, now provides individuals interested in learning about the Bahá'í Faith with a large and ever-expanding body of authentic material on the Faith, attractively presented and illustrated. Sites maintained by Covenant-breaker groups will have a diminishing impact in the context of the information deluge on the Internet and against the background of the authorized Bahá'í source now accessible.

The greatest protection to the Cause will, of course, be through ongoing deepening of the Bahá'í community in the Covenant and the history and teachings of the Faith. To facilitate this, you may wish to bring attention to the availability of the Sacred Text on the Web site "The Bahá'í World" and on the Bahá'í World Centre FTP server.

(From a letter dated 4 June 1997 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

Comments

MAY 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1982, AMOZ GIBSON DIED. HE SERVED ON THE UHJ FROM ITS FOUNDING IN 1963 UNTIL HIS DEATH. BEFORE THAT SERVED ON THE NSA OF THE U.S., AN AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBER FOR PROPAGATION, AND A PIONEER TO THE NAVAJO INDIAN RESERVATION.

May 14. On this date in 1982, Amoz Gibson died. He served on the Universal House of Justice from its founding in 1963 until his death. Before that served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, an Auxiliary Board member for propogation, and a pioneer to the Navajo Indian Reservation.

Amoz Gibson was born in Washington, D.C., on August 3, 1918, and received a bachelors degree in education from Miner Teachers College (now the University of the District of Columbia) in 1940 and a master of arts in geography from Mexico City College (now University of the Americas) in 1951. He was inducted into the US Army in 1944 and served in Europe and the Pacific. He returned to Washington in 1946 and continued his work in the educational field as a teacher. In the mid-1950s he pioneered to the Navajo Indian Reservation, where he taught for four years. In 1959 he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for protection, and in 1960 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. In 1963 he was elected to the first Universal House of Justice.

His career is typical for individuals in the Bahá'í hierarchy, whether in an elected office or in an appointed offce from which the higher elected officials invariably come from.

At all levels, including the LSAs, Bahá'í leaders are generally as authoritarian, if not more, than clergy from other religious faiths, which as Dale Husband points out, is one of the Four Ways to Create a Religion of Hypocrites:

1. State that religion no longer needs clergy……and replace them with leaders that are as authoritarian as the clergy ever was.
2. Claim that men and women should be equal……but then deny women membership in the all-powerful leadership council of the religion.

3. Condemn as heretics those who believe in your religion but dare to challenge the claims of your religion's current leadership, while at the same time claiming to welcome as friends the followers of other religions.
4. Claim there is harmony between science and religion, but also claim that anything your leaders say is absolutely true, even if on topics science is expected to address.

Any one of these makes a religion not worth following, but what do you do if you find a religion that has all four such contradictions

Comments

MAY 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, ACCORDING TO RUTH MOFFETT, "A MOST REMARKABLE BLOODLESS REVOLUTION OCCURRED, WHEN 4,000,000 MOSLEMS FLED AND 1,000,000 JEWS MARCHED IN AND BEGAN TILLING THEIR ANCESTRAL SOIL, AND A NEW NATION WAS BORN. TODAY THE BLUE AND WHITE FLAG WITH THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM FLUTTERS..

May 14. On this date in 1948, according to Ruth Moffett, "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world youngest democracy -- nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow. Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!"

Ruth Moffett was born on January 19, 1880 and met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on a train platform in Chicago in 1912. After attending one of his lectures, she became a Bahá'í and became active in service in 1919. Her teaching efforts took her throughout the Americas, Europe, Egypt and the Near East. The Greatest Holy Leaf (Bahiyyih Khanum) named her Ruhaniyyih, conoting spirituality, joy and beauty. Ruth J. Moffett died on July 5, 1978.

On May 18, 1954, Ruhaniyyih Ruth Moffett arrived in Israel. She described the founding of that country six years previous as "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world youngest democracy -- nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow. Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!"

At 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18, the Royal Sabena glided along the runway to the first stop in Brussels, Belgium, after the long transoceanic flight. There the same plane was reconditioned and flew over Europe, and Brindisi, the tip of the heel of Italy, over the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas, and arrived in Athens, where the plane was again reconditioned, and arrived at 10:30 p.m., May 18, 1954 at the airport at Jappa, Tel Aviv, Israel. This is the modern miracle, to travel thousands of miles from Chicago to Tel Aviv in only thirty nine hours!

As the Royal Sabena plane winged its way toward Israel, Ruhaniyyih wondered how it would look in comparison with when she saw it before - a desert land filled with rocks, sand, thorny bushes and confusion, and where everyone seemed to be against his neighbor. As the approaching lights of the Holy Land again came into view, her heart was filled with joyful and reverential expectancy and she thought to the words of the song, "Israel - The Land of Promise Welcomes You".

As she gazed meditatively at the approaching lights of the Holy Land, the panorama of history seemed to unroll before her mind: of how Palestine was peopled by cave dwellers in about 3500 B.C.; of how Abraham was led to this land, and God made a covenant with Him, "that in the seed of Abraham shall all the nations of the earth be blest"; of the Cananites, and later how Moses led the Israelites out of bondage, and for forty years in the wilderness, and Joshua led them to the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; how the Jewish people built up the land but turned away from God to gods of their own making. Then Saul became the first king and established a civic kingdom, but he died. David became the king unifying the kingdom and calling them to return to God: and David died and was called to his fathers. Solomon, his son became King. He expanded the kingdom, and to this day, the glory and unity of his kingdom is still sung. But Solomon died and the tribes became divided. Then the Assyrians in 1722 B.C., destroyed Damascus and Israel and took the tribes into captivity, and they became scattered. After the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C. the remaining tribes of Judah were taken into Babylonia and scattered. Alexander the Great captured Palestine in 332 B.C. The coming of Jusus, the Christ, had a profound effect on the history of this land, which became a noted center of pilgrimages.

Under the Moslem dominion from 636 A.D. for four centuries, and the long period of the Christian Crusades, one lasting 100 years, there was much destruction and a little progress. It was under the control of the Ottoman Turks from 1516 until the first World War, then it cecame a mandate of Great Britain, under the League of Nations. "The White Paper" gave the promise that the doors of Palestine would again open to her people. Many outbreaks of violence have occurred between the Jews and Arabs, which have caused this land to become on of the danger spots of the world. After World War II, the Jews began returning in large numbers, until today there are about 1,465,000 Jews, gathered from 75 countries, 125,000 Moslems, 40,000 Christians, and 16,000 Druzes in Israel.

On May 14, 1948, a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world youngest democracy -- nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow. Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!

Comments

MAY 14. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, THE SAME DAY AS DAVID BEN GURION'S DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, THE ARAB VILLAGE OF AL-NUQAYB, WHERE ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ HAD OWNED LAND AND GROWN GRAIN, WAS DEPOPULATED IN THE FIGHTING WHICH BROKE OUT AFTER THE UN'S ADOPTION OF THE PARTITION PLAN FOR PALESTINE.

May 14. On this date in 1948, the Arab village of al-Nuqayb, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had owned land and grown grain, was depopulated in the fighting which broke out after the U.N. General Assembly's adoption on November 29, 1947 of the Partition Plan for Palestine.

Al-Nuqayb (transliterated as Nughayb in the Bahá'í orthography) is mentioned in Lady Blomfield's *The Chosen Highway*, in the sectioned titled *Bahá'í Villages*.

The Master bought from time to time some land in various villages. Asfiya and Daliya, near Haifa--these two properties He bestowed upon Diya'u'llah and Badi'u'llah, the two younger half-brothers, at the request of Bahá'u'lláh.

Land was also acquired in the villages of Samrih, Nughayb, and 'Adasiyyih, situated near the Jordan.

In his book *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, the historian Walid Khalidi details the history of many of these Palestinian villages and how they were depopulated. For example, he notes that in the 1880s most of the village land of al-Samra was purchased by the Bahá'u'lláh, with the villagers continuing to farm as tenant farmers. In the 1920s, this land was sold by Shoghi Effendi to the Jewish National Fund.

Bahá'í Villages in *The Chosen Highway* chronicles in some detail how 'Abdu'l-Bahá used the grain he had grown in these villages to supply the British Army during World War I.

We learned that when the British marched into Haifa there was some difficulty about the commissariat. The officer in command went to consult the Master.

"I have corn," was the reply.

"But for the army?" said the astonished soldier.

"I have corn for the British Army," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

He truly walked the Mystic way with practical feet. [footnote: Lady Blomfield often recounted how the corn pits proved a safe hiding-place for the corn, during the occupation of the Turkish army. -Ed.]

According to Harry Charles Luke, an official in the British Colonial Office who served as assistant Governor of Jerusalem,

Sir 'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l Baha had travelled extensively in Europe and America to expound his doctrines, and on the 4th December, 1919, was created by King George V a K.B.E. for valuable services rendered to the British Government in the early days of the Occupation.

On April 27, 1920, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ceremonially knighted, an event which was prominently reported in the Bahá'í periodical *Star of the West*.

THE following beautiful description of this event was written by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi who was at that time in Haifa: "Among the kings and governments of the world who have become convinced that Abdul Bahá was the well-wisher and the lover of mankind are King George and his government. The King sent a medal to Abdul Bahá with the title, "Sir", thus making him a member of his household. On the 27th of April, 1920, the Governor and high officials of Haifa, Palestine presented in a beautiful garden **a most wonderful celebration for the knighting of Abdul Baha.** Bahai pilgrims from Persia, America and all parts of the world were present. Mohammedan, Christian, Jewish leaders, clergymen, notables and local officials from Haifa, Acca and other towns attended. A tent was pitched in the center of the garden. **English troops stood on both sides, from the gate of the garden to the center where Abdul Bahá was seated.** The military music added wonderful melody to the rustling leaves of the beautiful trees. The breezes of the spring on that sunny afternoon imparted a remarkable vigor to the physical body just as the presence of Abdul Baha strengthened the souls. The Governor stood behind Abdul Bahá and, after a short speech, interpreted by Mr. Wadie Bistani, presented the medal. Then Abdul Baha, rising from his seat, gave a brief talk and a prayer for the British government.

On February 23, 1914, at the eve of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had hosted Baron Edmond James de Rothschild, a member of the Rothschild banking family who was a leading advocate and financier of the Zionist movement, during one of his early trips to Palestine.

On September 8, 1919, subsequent to the British occupation of Palestine, at a time when tens of thousands of Jewish settlers were arriving under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association, an article in the "Star of the West" quoted 'Abdu'l-Bahá praising the Zionist movement, proclaiming that "There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less" and that "A Jewish government might come later."

At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi was matriculated at Balliol College. In a letter to Marzieh Gail, Shoghi Effendi outlined his educational ambitions at Balliol College, specifically to study with eminent professors and Orientalists, noting alumni who were all Imperialists.

After 'Abdu'l-Bahá 's death, Shoghi Effendi would continue to have close relations with the leading political administrators and prominent Zionist leaders. For example, on January 24, 1922, Shoghi Effendi received a letter from Herbert Samuel, the British High Commissioner for Palestine. The receipt of the letter is mentioned in Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's *The Priceless Pearl*. As High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel was the first Jew to govern the historic land of Israel in 2,000 years, and his appointment was regarded by the Muslim-Christian Associations as the "first step in formation of Zionist national home in the midst of Arab people."Herbert Samuel welcomed the arrival of Jewish settlers under the auspices of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association and recognised Hebrew as one of the three official languages of the Mandate territory.

While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:

Dear Mr. Rabbani,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains. It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case. I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement. Should you be at any time in Jerusalem in would be a pleasure to me to see you here.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Samuel

Six years after these events, on May 18, 1954, Ruhaniyyih Ruth Moffett, one of the outstanding traveling speakers for the religion who is known to have aided the founding of Bahá'í communities, described the founding of that country six years previous as "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world" youngest democracy --"" nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow". Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!"

At 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18, the Royal Sabena glided along the runway to the first stop in Brussels, Belgium, after the long transoceanic flight. There the same plane was reconditioned and flew over Europe, and Brindisi, the tip of the heel of Italy, over the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas, and arrived in Athens, where the plane was again reconditioned, and arrived at 10:30 p.m., May 18, 1954 at the airport at Jappa, Tel Aviv, Israel. This is the modern miracle, to travel thousands of miles from Chicago to Tel Aviv in only thirty nine hours!

As the Royal Sabena plane winged its way toward Israel, Ruhaniyyih wondered how it would look in comparison with when she saw it before - a desert land filled with rocks, sand, thorny bushes and confusion, and where everyone seemed to be against his neighbor. As the approaching lights of the Holy Land again came into view, her heart was filled with joyful and reverential expectancy and she thought to the words of the song, "Israel - The Land of Promise Welcomes You".

As she gazed meditatively at the approaching lights of the Holy Land, the panorama of history seemed to unroll before her mind: of how Palestine was peopled by cave dwellers in about 3500 B.C.; of how Abraham was led to this land, and God made a covenant with Him, "that in the seed of Abraham shall all the nations of the earth be blest"; of the Cananites, and later how Moses led the Israelites out of bondage, and for forty years in the wilderness, and Joshua led them to the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; how the Jewish people built up the land but turned away from God to gods of their own making. Then Saul became the first king and established a civic kingdom, but he died. David became the king unifying the kingdom and calling them to return to God: and David died and was called to his fathers. Solomon, his son became King. He expanded the kingdom, and to this day, the glory and unity of his kingdom is still sung. But Solomon died and the tribes became divided. Then the Assyrians in 1722 B.C., destroyed Damascus and Israel and took the tribes into captivity, and they became scattered. After the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C. the remaining tribes of Judah were taken into Babylonia and scattered. Alexander the Great captured Palestine in 332 B.C. The coming of Jusus, the Christ, had a profound effect on the history of this land, which became a noted center of pilgrimages.

Under the Moslem dominion from 636 A.D. for four centuries, and the long period of the Christian Crusades, one lasting 100 years, there was much destruction and a little progress. It was under the control of the Ottoman Turks from 1516 until the first World War, then it cecame a mandate of Great Britain, under the League of Nations. "The White Paper" gave the promise that the doors of Palestine would again open to her people. Many outbreaks of violence have occurred between the Jews and Arabs, which have caused this land to become on of the danger spots of the world. After World War II, the Jews began returning in large numbers, until today there are about 1,465,000 Jews, gathered from 75 countries, 125,000 Moslems, 40,000 Christians, and 16,000 Druzes in Israel.

On May 14, 1948, a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world" youngest democracy --"" nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow". Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!

Ruth J. Moffett was born on January 19, 1880 and met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on a train platform in Chicago in 1912. After attending one of his lectures, she became a Bahá'í and became active in service in 1919. Her teaching efforts took her throughout the Americas, Europe, Egypt and the Near East. The Greatest Holy Leaf (Bahiyyih Khanum) named her Ruhaniyyih, conoting spirituality, joy and beauty. Ruth J. Moffett died on July 5, 1978.

Comments

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE 1940, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THAT "IN CONNECTION WITH THE SELECTION OF PARTICULAR PHOTOGRAPHS OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ FOR CIRCULATION AMONG THE FRIENDS... NO DEFINITE RULING SHOULD BE LAID DOWN ESTABLISHING THE SUPERIORITY OR DISTINCTION OF ANY PARTICULAR PHOTOGRAPH."

May 15. On this date 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "In connection with the selection of particular photographs of Abdu'l-Bahá for circulation among the friends... no definite ruling should be laid down establishing the superiority or distinction of any particular photograph."

1623. Photographs of Abdu'l-Bahá

"In connection with the selection of particular photographs of Abdu'l-Bahá for circulation among the friends, the Guardian strongly feels that no definite ruling should be laid down establishing the superiority or distinction of any particular photograph. The friends should be left quite free to use their individual independent judgement in this matter."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, May 15, 1940: Bahá'í News, No. 138, September 1940, p. 1)

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1901, THE CHICAGO BAHÁ'ÍS ELECTED A NINE-MAN BOARD OF COUNCIL FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS.

May 15. On this date in 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12.

On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandarání of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for

all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

(30 November 1930)

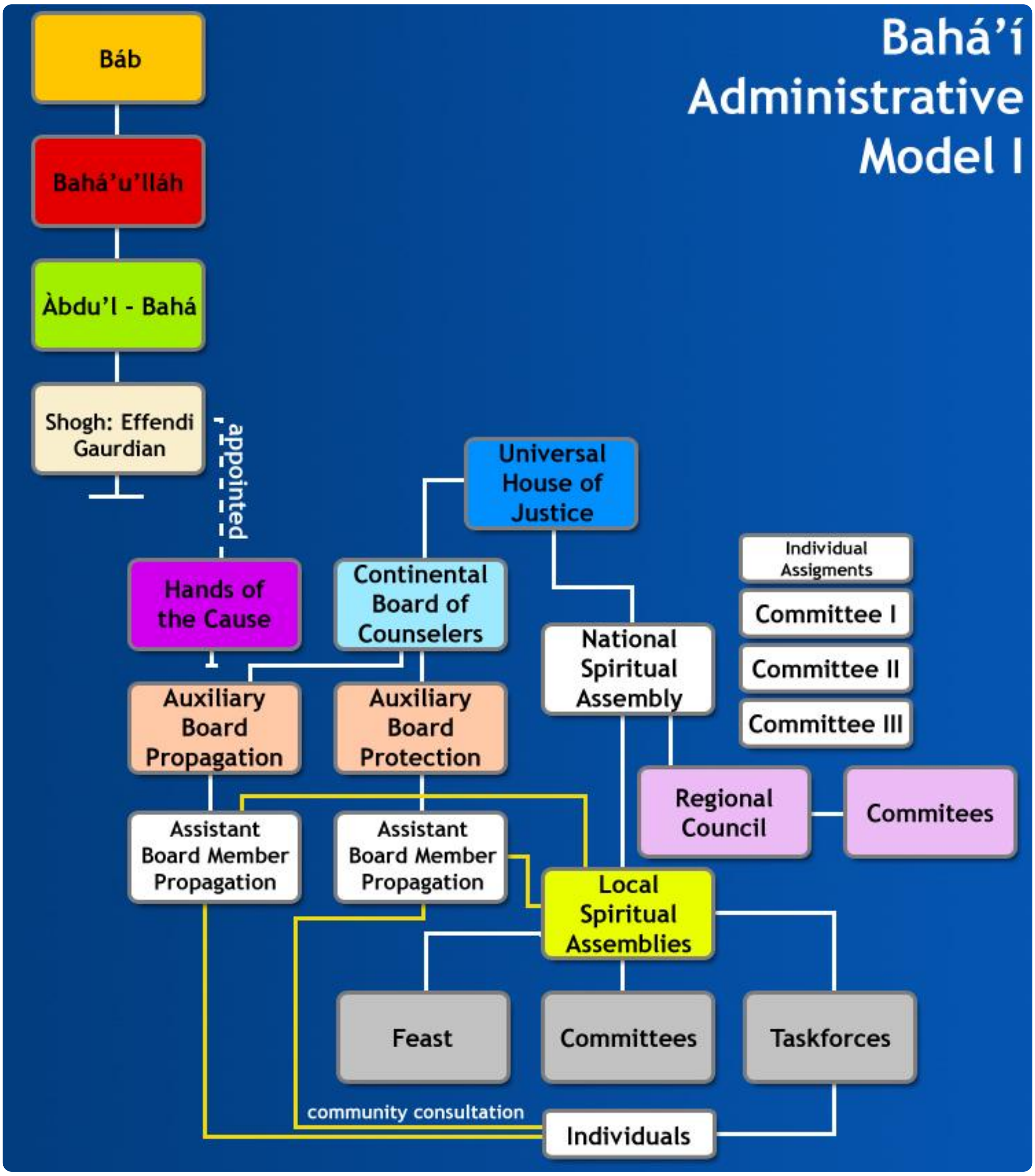
On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.

"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.


Bahá'í Administrative Model I
Báb
Bahá'u'lláh
Àbdu'l - Bahá
Shogh: Effendi Gaurdian
appointed
Hands of the Cause
Continental Board of Counselers
Universal House of Justice
Auxiliary Board Propagation
Auxiliary Board Protection
National Spiritual Assembly
Individual Assigments
Committee I
Committee II
Committee III
Regional Council
Commitees
Assistant Board Member Propagation
Assistant Board Member Propagation
Local Spiritual Assemblies
Feast
Committees
Taskforces
community consultation
Individuals

Comments

Original Index: 1472 | Current Position: 105

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1874, CHARLES MASON REMEY WAS BORN. AN ARCHITECT WHO DESIGNED THREE BAHÁ'Í HOUSES OF WORSHIP, HE WAS ALSO A HAND OF THE CAUSE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL, AND AFTER SHOGHI EFFENDI'S DEATH, A CLAIMANT TO THE OFFICE OF GUARDIAN.

May 15. On this date in 1874, Charles Mason Remey was born. Charles Mason Remey was an early and active Bahá'í who, along with Howard C. Struven, became the first Bahá'ís to make a complete circuit of the world. Mason Remey would later become a Hand of the Cause, the president of the International Bahá'í Council, and after Shoghi Effendi's death, a claimant to the office of Guardian. Charles Mason Remey was the architect for the Bahá'í Houses of Worship in Uganda and Australia, and Shoghi Effendi approved his design of the unbuilt House of Worship in Haifa, Israel.

Mason Remey based his claim to be the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith the idea that by appointing him as President of the International Bahá'í Council, the embryonic form of the Universal House of Justice which would be led by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi had in fact implicitly named him as the second Guardian. Mason Remey's claim was largely rejected with several notable exceptions, including five members of the National Spiritual Assembly of France led by Joel Marangella. The remaining 26 Hands of the Cause unanimously declared Remey and whoever followed him Covenant-breakers.

Comments

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1845, THE BÁB ARRIVED IN BUSHEHR, HAVING COMPLETED THE HAJJ PILGRIMAGE, ACCOMPANIED BY A BLACK SLAVE NAMED MUBÁRAK AND QUDDÚS (MULLÁ MUḤAMMAD ‘ALÍ-I-BÁRFURÚSHÍ), WHO WAS THE EIGHTEENTH BELIEVER IN THE BÁB. IN BUSHEHR THE BÁB SPENT TEN DAYS WITH HIS ELDEST MATERNAL ...

May 15. On this date in 1845, the Báb arrived in Bushehr, having completed the Hajj pilgrimage, accompanied by a black slave named Mubárak and Quddús (Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí-i-Bárfurúshí), who was the eighteenth believer in the Báb.

The Báb performed the Hajj after the eighteen Letters of the Living had accepted him as the Báb. On September 10, 1844, the Báb departed Shiraz for the Hajj pilgrimage, accompanied by a black slave named Mubárak and Quddús (Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí-i-Bárfurúshí), who was the eighteenth believer in the Báb. .

In Mecca the Báb publicly declared his claim at the Kaaba and to the Sharif of Mecca.

On February 6, 1845, the Báb departed Medina, having completed his Hajj pilgrimage.

The Báb arrived in Bushehr on May 15, 1845, accompanied by a black slave named Mubárak and Quddús (Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí-i-Bárfurúshí), who was the eighteenth believer in the Báb.

In Bushehr, the Báb spent ten days with his eldest maternal uncle, Hájí Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad, to whom Bahá'u'lláh would later address the *Kitáb-i Íqán* in January 1861.

The Báb then sent Quddús ahead of him to Shiraz, who brought the Báb's instruction that there was to be an addition made to the call to prayer (adhán). When Mullá Sádiq-i-Muqaddas tried to carry this out, he, Quddús, Mullá 'Alí-Akbar Ardistání, and Mullá Abú-Tálib were seized, severely beaten and expelled from the city.

Three years later, on March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated. Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis.

They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Quddús arrived at the Shrine and became the commander of the Bábís upon his arrival. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849. Quddús himself became a prisoner and was being escorted to Tehran when, in Barfurúsh, the local population lynched him. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere in Iran, notably Neyriz and Zanjan.

Comments

Original Index: 1474 | Current Position: 107

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE 1913, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WROTE A TABLET TO SAICHIRO FUJITA, "AS REGARD TO THY PROFESSION OF ELECTRICITY. ENDEAVOR FROM EVERY DIRECTION THAT THOU MAYEST GAIN PERFECT EFFICIENCY IN IT — SO THAT I MAY SEND FOR THEE TO COME WITH ELECTRICAL MACHINE (AUTOMOBILE) AND LIGHTING PLANT ..."

May 15. On this date 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote a Tablet to Saichiro Fujita, "As regard to thy profession of electricity. Endeavor from every direction that thou mayest gain perfect efficiency in it — so that I may send for thee to come with electrical machine (automobile) and lighting plant — in order that in the Holy Land thou mayest know how to run the electrical engines and dynamos, how to install electrical lights through the buildings and how to fill the batteries of the (automobile) and act (if necessary) as chauffeur. When thou shalt learn these things then I will send for thee. Thou wilt be confirmed to render a great service and this will become the cause of thine everlasting glory."

Comments

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1940, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED STATES THAT "REGARDING THE AGE OF FIFTEEN FIXED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: THIS RELATES ONLY TO PURELY SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONS AND OBLIGATIONS AND IS NOT RELATED TO THE DEGREE OF ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY WHICH ...."

May 15. On this date in 1940, Shoghi Effendi wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the United states that "Regarding the age of fifteen fixed by Bahá'u'lláh: This relates only to purely spiritual functions and obligations and is not related to the degree of administrative capacity which is a totally different thing, and is, for the present, fixed at twenty-one."

515. Age 15 Relates to Spiritual Functions and Obligations

"Regarding the age of fifteen fixed by Bahá'u'lláh: This relates only to purely spiritual functions and obligations and is not related to the degree of administrative capacity which is a totally different thing, and is, for the present, fixed at twenty-one."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, May 15, 1940: Bahá'í News, No. 138, p. 1, September 1940)

Comments

Original Index: 1476 | Current Position: 109

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "THE OBLIGATION TO TEACH IS ESSENTIALLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUNG BELIEVERS. THEIR WHOLE TRAINING SHOULD THEREFORE BE DIRECTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE THEM COMPETENT TEACHERS. IT IS FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE THAT BAHÁ'Í SUMMER SCHOOLS, WHICH ..."

May 15. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote "The obligation to teach is essentially the responsibility of young believers. Their whole training should therefore be directed in such a way as to make them competent teachers. It is for this very purpose that Bahá'í summer schools, which constitute the very basis upon which the Bahá'í universities of the future will be established, should be widely attended by young believers."

2264. The obligation to teach is essentially the responsibility of young believers. Their whole training should therefore be directed in such a way as to make them competent teachers. It is for this very purpose that Bahá'í summer schools, which constitute the very basis upon which the Bahá'í universities of the future will be established, should be widely attended by young believers.

(15 May 1936 to Bahá'í Youth Groups United States)

Comments

MAY 15. ON THIS DATE IN 1991, THE "BAHA'I JOURNAL" PUBLISHED A LETTER FROM THE UHJ TO AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAD EXPRESSED "PUZZLEMENT OVER THE STATEMENT IN ITS RIDVÁN 1990 MESSAGE REFERRING TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS 'THE MOST PRECIOUS BEING EVER TO HAVE DRAWN BREATH ON THIS PLANET'."

May 15. On this date in 1991, the "Baha'i Journal" published a letter from the UHJ to an individual who had expressed "puzzlement over the statement in its Ridván 1990 message referring to Bahá'u'lláh as 'the most precious Being ever to have drawn breath on this planet'."

20 June, 1991

Dear Bahá'í Friend, Further to our letter of 25 November 1990, we have been directed by the Universal House of Justice to convey the following response to your inquiry of 24 June 1990. The delay is sincerely regretted.

The House of Justice appreciates your frankness concerning your puzzlement over the statement in its Ridván 1990 message referring to Bahá'u'lláh as "the most precious Being ever to have drawn breath on this planet". You are entirely correct in drawing upon Bahá'u'lláh's statement, cited on pages 78-79 of "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", to point out the oneness and sameness of the "essence of all the Prophets of God". The statement of the House of Justice should not be taken to imply anything to the contrary, but rather should be seen in the historical context of His Revelation and in its nature and character relative to the Revelations that preceded it. As Bahá'u'lláh has said in the same passage in the "Gleanings" from which you quoted: The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal Himself through specific acts.... Concerning His own Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh has testified to "the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation" and said: That which hath been made manifest in this preeminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.... In the following statement written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi offers important clarification on the question of the sameness of the essence of the Prophets and the comparative qualities of their

Revelations in this world: Bahá'u'lláh is not the intermediary between other Manifestations and God. Each has His own relation to the Primal Source. But in the sense that Bahá'u'lláh is the greatest Manifestation to yet appear, the One Who consummates the Revelation of Moses, He was the One Moses conversed with in the Burning Bush. In other words Bahá'u'lláh identifies the Glory of the Godhead on that occasion with Himself. No distinction can be made amongst the Prophets in the sense that They all proceed from one source, and are of one essence. But Their stations and functions in this world are different. This statement calls to mind several passages from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which Shoghi Effendi quotes in "God Passes By", page 99: "In this most mighty Revelation," He moreover states, "all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation." And again: "None among the Manifestations of old, except to a prescribed degree, hath ever completely apprehended the nature of this Revelation." Referring to His [Bahá'u'lláh's] own station He declares: "But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the Robe of Prophethood, nor would any of the sacred Scriptures have been revealed." Also of relevance to the difference in stations between Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and those which have preceded or will come after it is the beloved Guardian's response to an inquiry which, as conveyed, said: "There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in station to Bahá'u'lláh having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years…." The House of Justice trusts that these points will resolve your puzzlement and assures you and your family of its prayers at the Holy Threshold that the Blessed Beauty may surround you with His unfailing confirmations. With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat

Comments

MAY 16. ON THIS DATE IN 2000, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF SOUTH AFRICA ANSWERING "A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS."

May 16. On this date in 2000, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South Africa answering "a number of questions related to Regional Bahá'í Councils."

The Universal House of Justice

Department of the Secretariat

16 May 2000

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South Africa

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email . . . in which you pose a number of questions related to Regional Bahá'í Councils. . . .

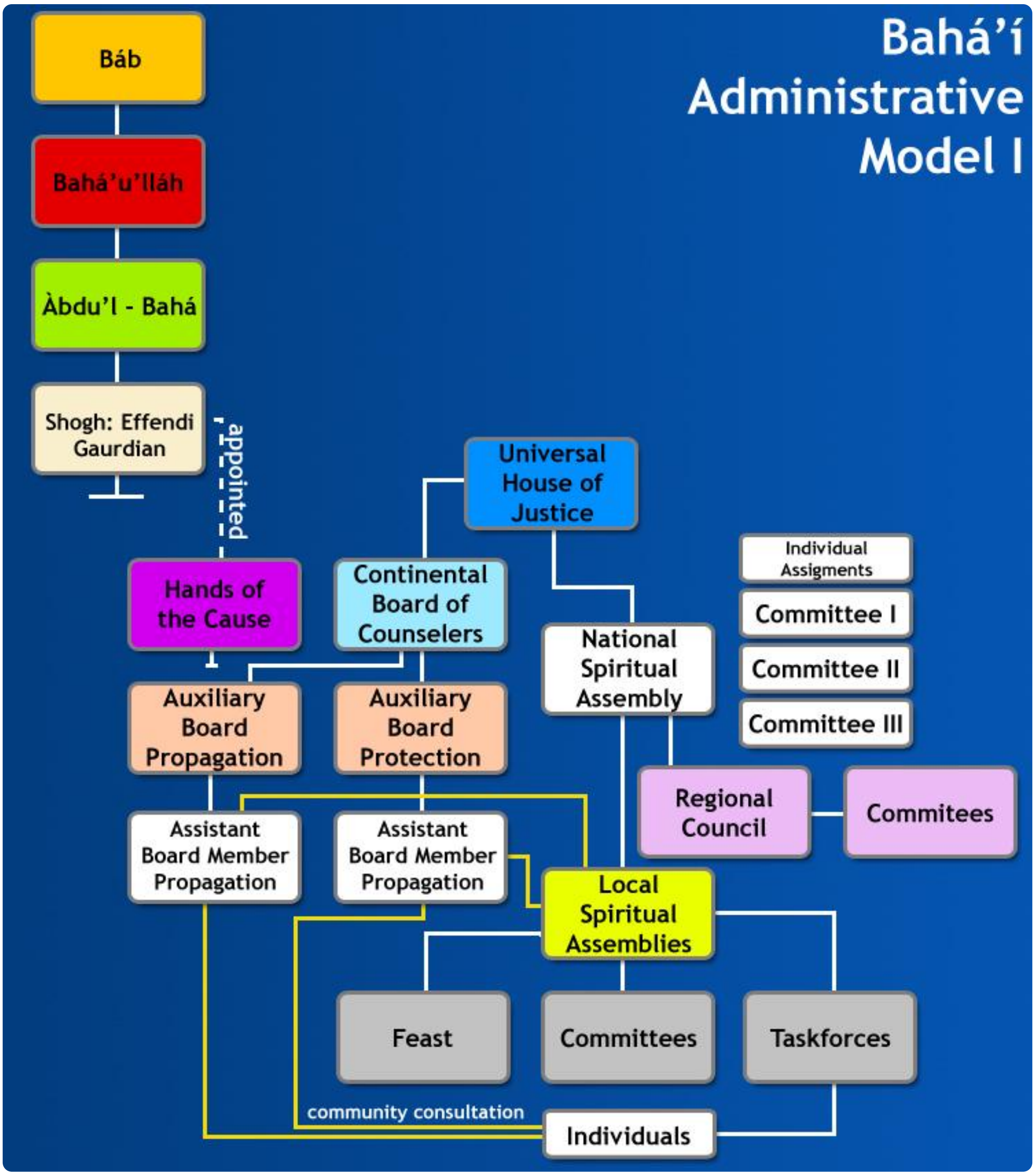
In reference to your first question, the establishment of administrative committees where Local Spiritual Assemblies are not yet functioning constitutes an important step in the development of local Bahá'í communities. Appointing such committees is a function of the National Spiritual Assembly; however, it can certainly delegate this task to the Regional Councils, if it so wishes.

Your second question is whether or not a Regional Bahá'í Council can accept or dissolve a Local Spiritual Assembly in its area of jurisdiction. Although the prerogative of recognition of Local Spiritual Assemblies rests with the National Spiritual Assembly, procedures for accepting Local Assemblies are determined at the discretion of the National Assembly. The question of dissolving Local Assemblies is another matter; it should not be delegated by the National Assembly to the Regional Councils at this time. The Councils can, of course, make recommendations to the National Assembly in this respect.

As to your final query, you quote a passage concerning the need for newly enrolled believers to understand that there is an administration in the Faith which must be obeyed and ask whether this applies to Regional Councils. Clearly for a Regional Council to carry out the range of responsibilities with which it has been entrusted, it has to have the complete support of the friends, and its decisions should carry due weight. Each of these decisions is made within the context of one of the functions delegated by the National Assembly to the Regional Council. The response of the friends will be commensurate with the nature of that function.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat


Bahá'í
Administrative
Model I
Báb
Bahá'u'lláh
Àbdu'l - Bahá
Shogh: Effendi
Gaurdian
appointed
Universal
House of
Justice
Hands of
the Cause
Continental
Board of
Counselers
National
Spiritual
Assembly
Individual
Assigments
Committee I
Committee II
Committee III
Auxiliary
Board
Propagation
Auxiliary
Board
Protection
Regional
Council
Commitees
Assistant
Board Member
Propagation
Assistant
Board Member
Propagation
Local
Spiritual
Assemblies
Feast
Committees
Taskforces
community consultation
Individuals

Comments

MAY 16. ON THIS DATE IN 1849, MULLÁ MUḤAMMAD ‘ALÍ-I-BÁRFURÚSHÍ (QUDDÚS) WAS LYNCHED BY A MOB IN HIS HOMETOWN OF BARFURÚSH IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE BÁBI DEFEAT AT THE SHRINE OF SHAYKH TABARSI. QUDDÚS WAS THE 18TH BELIEVER IN THE BÁB AND HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM TO MECCA ON THE HAJJ PILGRIMAGE IN 1844.

May 16. On this date in 1849, Mullá Muḥammad ‘Alí-i-Bárfurúshí (Quddús) was lynched by a mob in his hometown of Barfurúsh in the aftermath of the Bábi defeat at the Shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi.

Quddús was the eighteenth believer in the Báb and had accompanied him to Mecca on the Hajj pilgrimage in 1844.

On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i, who in 1844 had become the first person to become a follower of the Báb, visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated. Subsequent to his visit, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i became involved in the Bábi uprisings. Under instructions from the Báb,

Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis. They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Quddús arrived at the Shrine and became the commander of the Bábís upon his arrival.

Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849.

Quddús himself became a prisoner and was being escorted to Tehran when, in Barfurúsh, the local population lynched him. The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850, but uprisings continued in other cities, notably Zanjan and Neyriz.

Comments

Original Index: 1469 | Current Position: 113

MAY 16. ON THIS DATE IN 1933, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL THAT "WHATEVER WE SAY OF GERMANY, WE HAVE TO ADMIT THAT ITS PEOPLE ARE ENDOWED WITH A SPIRITUAL VITALITY QUITE SUPERIOR TO MANY OTHER RACES."

May 16. On this date in 1933, Shoghi Effendi wrote Adelbert Mühlschlegel that "whatever we say of Germany, we have to admit that its people are endowed with a spiritual vitality quite superior to many other races."

16 May 1933

Dear Dr. Muhlschlegel:

The Guardian ... does sincerely hope that the reports we receive here about the sentiments rampant in Germany are untrue to fact, that it is a regeneration of the people rather than a retrogression towards a dead past. **Because whatever we say of Germany, we have to admit that its people are endowed with a spiritual vitality quite superior to many other races.** Being in the heart of that populated continent and being inspired by such a strong religious spirit, Germany can easily achieve a wonderful task in regenerating the world. The eyes of the world are surely centered around it expecting to see what it will do.

Yet we Bahá'ís should remember that we stand above politics. That that field does not interest us; that we attribute importance to things of the spirit, that we await salvation to come from the Faith that burns in our hearts.

In his moments of prayer and meditation at the Blessed Shrines, the Guardian will think of you and the other friends in Germany and ask God to guide you and assist you in playing your important role of spiritualizing the whole world--so immersed at present in material pursuits and interests....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and precious co-worker:

I was so pleased to receive your letter. I long to hear more fully and more frequently from you. You are a tower of ... and a pillar of His Faith in that land. Germany has a glorious future under the banner of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Its mission is to champion the cause of God in Europe and establish it firmly in the heart of that continent. The tests and trials which have beset the Faith in that land were necessary and providential. It is for the German believers, who have weathered the storm, to arise and promote the Cause, to proclaim the non-political character of their Faith, to establish its nascent institutions and prove by their words and acts their freedom from every taint of particularism and prejudice. May the Almighty guide their steps, sustain them in their efforts and bless their activities.

Shoghi

On February 11, 1934, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to a German Bahá'í stating about the Nazi government that "obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed, the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í" and that "our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany, which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present."

11 February 1934

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am charged by the Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 30th as well as for the enclosed pamphlet containing the address delivered by Herr Hitler on Oct. 14th, 1933, on the subject of Germany's attitude towards peace, all of which he read with deepest care and sustained interest. He wishes me to convey to you and to all the members of your German National Assembly and through them to all the followers of the Faith in Germany his views on the present conditions in that land, and particularly in their relation to the nature and scope of the Bahá'í activities of our German believers.

At the outset it should be made indubitably clear that the Bahá'í Cause being essentially a religious movement of a spiritual character stands above every political party or group, and thus cannot and should not act in contravention to the principles, laws, and doctrines of any government. **Obedience to the regulations and orders of the state is indeed,**

the sacred obligation of every true and loyal Bahá'í. Both Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá have urged us all to be submissive and loyal to the political authorities of our respective countries. It follows, therefore, that **our German friends are under the sacred obligation to whole-heartedly obey the existing political regime, whatever be their personal views and criticisms of its actual working. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of the Cause than open rebellion against the governmental authorities of a country, specially if they do not interfere in and do not oppose the inner and sacred beliefs and religious convictions of the individual. And there is every reason to believe that the present regime in Germany which has thus far refused to trample upon the domain of individual conscience in all matters pertaining to religion will never encroach upon it in the near future, unless some unforeseen and unexpected changes take place. And this seems to be doubtful at present.**

For whereas the friends should obey the government under which they live, even at the risk of sacrificing all their administrative affairs and interests, they should under no circumstances suffer their inner religious beliefs and convictions to be violated and transgressed by any authority whatever. **A distinction of a fundamental importance must, therefore, be made between spiritual and administrative matters. Whereas the former are sacred and inviolable, and hence cannot be subject to compromise, the latter are secondary and can consequently be given up and even sacrificed for the sake of obedience to the laws and regulations of the government. Obedience to the state is so vital a principle of the Cause that should the authorities in Germany decide to-day to prevent the Bahá'ís from holding any meeting or publishing any literature they should obey and be as submissive as our Russian believers have thus far been under the Soviet regime. But, as already pointed out, such an allegiance is confined merely to administrative matters which if checked can only retard the progress of the Faith for some time. In matters of belief, however, no compromise whatever should be allowed, even though the outcome of it be death or expulsion**

There is one more point to be emphasized in this connection. The principle of obedience to government does not place any Bahá'í under the obligation of identifying the teachings of his Faith with the political program enforced by the government. For such an identification, besides being erroneous and contrary to both the spirit as well as the form of the Bahá'í message, would necessarily create a conflict within the conscience of every loyal believer.

For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe but over a large part of mankind is, indeed, the very negation of the gospel of peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. The actual trend in the political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.

From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.

The Guardian hopes that these brief explanations will be sufficient to guide our German National Assembly in their efforts to safeguard and promote the interests of the Faith, and that through them they will be given a new vision of the Cause and a fresh determination to carry forward its message to the world at large.

With greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in Germany,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in loving appreciation of your strenuous, your intelligent and devoted efforts for the spread and consolidation of our beloved Faith. May the Almighty bless your endeavours, deepen your understanding of the essentials and requirements of our beloved Cause, and enable you in these difficult and challenging days to promote its interests and consolidate its institutions,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

On April 25, 1938, one month after Nazi Germany's *Anschluss* of Austria, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated "it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs."

25 April 1938

Dear Friends,

The postcard message which you had sent the Guardian on the occasion of Dr. Muhlschlegel's visit to Vienna, has just been received, and it made him immensely happy to realize that the friends in Germany and Austria have been again drawn together, and are closer than ever in the past. He hopes that the removal of the barriers which have hitherto so sadly separated the German and Austrian communities will mark the beginning of a new era of unprecedented growth and expansion in your affairs. He is certain that you are fully alive to the far-reaching possibilities which the present hour offers, and wishes you therefore to be happy and thankful, and confident in the blessings which the future has in store for you, and your dear co-workers in that land.

I take this opportunity of assuring you once more of his prayers for your welfare, protection and continued guidance, and reciprocating your very kind greetings,...

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Assuring you in person of my incessant prayers for your protection, guidance and happiness,

your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

Comments

MAY 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, SHOGHI EFFENDI ADDRESSED A CABLEGRAM TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE WORD, CONDEMNING HIS ONE-TIME CLOSE COMPANION, SECRETARY, AND FIRST COUSIN AS "TREACHEROUS RUHI AFNAN."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 17. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi addressed a cablegram to the Bahá'ís of the word, condemning his one-time close companion, secretary, and first cousin as "treacherous Ruhi Afnan."

Treacherous Ruhi Afnan

Treacherous Ruhi Afnan, not content with previous disobedience, correspondence with Ahmad Sohrab, contact with old Covenant-breakers, sale, in conjunction with other members of family, of sacred property purchased by Founder of Faith, and allowing his sister to marry son of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemy, is now openly lecturing on Bahá'í movement, claiming to be its exponent and is misrepresenting the teachings and deliberately causing confusion in minds of authorities and the local population. Inform National Assemblies.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, May 17, 1953]

April 5. On this date in 1922, some four months after returning to Haifa subsequent to the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi left Haifa with his eldest cousin and close friend, Ruhi Afnan who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker, for rest and relaxation in the Bernese Oberland in the Swiss Alps. In his absence, Shoghi Effendi placed Bahíyyih Khánum as Head of the Cause, and later that month the "Star of the West" magazine would publish letters from Shoghi Effendi and Bahíyyih Khánum explaining the situation. Ruhi Afnan would be declared a Covenant-breaker in a series of cablegrams in the 1950's.

The cablegrams concerning the declaration of Ruhi Afnan a Covenant-breaker include one from December 13, 1951 titled "Old and New Covenant-Breakers" where Shoghi Effendi says, "Evidences multiplying attesting Ruhi's increasing rebelliousness, efforts exerted my eldest sister pave way fourth alliance members family Siyyid 'Alí involving marriage his granddaughter with Ruha's son and personal contact recently established my own treacherous, despicable brother Riaz with Majdi'd-Din, redoubtable enemy Faith, former henchman Muhammad-'Ali, Archbreaker Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant.

Comments

Original Index: 101 | Current Position: 115

MAY 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1957, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "...THE WORLD IS BEING SHAKEN TO ITS FOUNDATIONS AND THE PEOPLE ARE SEEKING. IF THE BAHÁ'ÍS WILL ARISE AS NEVER BEFORE TO TEACH THE CAUSE THEY WILL FIND MANY LISTENERS AND MANY WILL FIND ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH THEIR SACRIFICIAL EFFORTS."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 17. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "...the world is being shaken to its foundations and the people are seeking. If the Bahá'ís will arise as never before to teach the Cause they will find many listeners and many will find eternal life through their sacrificial efforts."

2007. ...the world is being shaken to its foundations and the people are seeking. If the Bahá'ís will arise as never before to teach the Cause they will find many listeners and many will find eternal life through their sacrificial efforts.

(From a letter dated 17 May 1957 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada)

Comments

Original Index: 102 | Current Position: 116

MAY 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1962, CARL SCHEFFLER DIED. AN AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í WHO SERVED ON THE NSA OF THE U.S. & CANADA, SERVING AS TREASURER FROM 1926 TO 1930, AS FINANCIAL SECRETARY FROM 1930 TO 1934, AND AS VICE-CHAIRMAN FROM 1934 TO 1938. HE ALSO TRAVELED AMERICA TO TEACH THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 17. On this date in 1962, Carl Scheffler died. An American Bahá'í who served on the NSA of the U.S. & Canada, serving as Treasurer from 1926 to 1930, as Financial Secretary from 1930 to 1934, and as Vice-Chairman from 1934 to 1938. He also traveled America to teach the Faith, particularly to youth. In his career he was an artist, and he served as owner and Director of the Evanston Academy of Fine Arts and as Director of Art in North Evanston Public Schools.

Carl Scheffler heard of the Faith in 1897, being introduced by a cousin who had attended Ibrahim Kheiralla's class on the religion. Carl and his family attended lectures by Kheiralla, and Carl became a Bahá'í in Chicago in 1899, the 665th individual to accept the Faith in the city. He was mentored in his studies of the religion by Thornton Chase, Albert Windust, Albert Greenleaf, and others, and remained a Bahá'í after Kheiralla attempted to usurp control of the religion in the West from ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, which caused many early believers to leave the Faith. He studied art at Smith Academy and the Chicago Art Institute in Chicago.

In 1907 Carl went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Thornton Chase and Arthur S. Agnew and met with ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, who instructed them to take steps towards constructing a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the United States. After returning home he was elected to the first Chicago House of Justice, and he served as Treasurer of the body for many years. On April 9, 1908, some lots at the site of the House of Worship were purchased by the Bahá'ís in Carl's name.

From 1911 to 1912 Carl was in Europe studying at art academies, and he served as a teacher at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and established the Evanston Academy of Fine Arts after returning to America. He served as teacher at the Chicago Academy for fourteen years.

In 1915, Carl married May Thurn. She was also a Bahá'í and served on the Archives and History Committee of the United States and Canada for many years.

Carl was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada when it was established in 1925, and served on the body until 1938. As of 1925 he was Secretary of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. In 1926 he was elected as Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly, succeeding Florence Morton, and he began preparing quarterly reports of the National Fund. As of 1927 he was serving on the Assemblies Temple Committee, as well as continuing to serve as Treasurer. As of 1928 he was no longer serving on the Temple Committee, instead serving on the Temple Maintenance Committee, the Legal Committee, and the Plan for Unified Action Committee. In 1929 he began serving on the Temple Committee again, which was then known as the Bahá'í Temple Unity

In 1930 Carl was elected to the new position of Financial Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, which was established to assume responsibility for interpreting the needs and policies of the National Fund, and deepening the Bahá'ís on its significance. In 1931 he was appointed to the Temple Program Committee. By 1933 he was serving as Chairman of the Publicity Committee. By early 1934 he was assisting the National Spiritual Assemblies Treasurer Roy Wilhelm as Assistant Treasurer. He was elected as Vice-Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly in 1934.

In 1936 Carl spoke at a public meeting held to promote the Faith at Fisk University in Nashville, alongside Mountfort Mills and Allen B. McDaniel. In February 1937 Carl spoke at the 25th Anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America in New York. He taught the Faith through public talks on the Ohio-Indiana circuit throughout 1937. He began serving on the Teaching and Training Children Committee of the National Assembly in 1937. In 1938 he spoke at Louhelen Summer School, and he was appointed to the Louhelen Summer School Committee. In 1939 Carl, Allen McDaniel, and Rex and Mary Collison were appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly to design Bahá'í exhibits for the 1939 World Fairs, and Carl designed a portable exhibit. In October 1939 he spoke at a Memorial for Martha Root at the House of Worship.

As of 1942 Carl was serving as Chairman of the Bahá'í Exhibits Committee. In 1943 he was appointed to the Centenary Committee, responsible for organizing the celebration of the Bahá'í Centenary in 1944, and he was assigned responsibility for preparing the Temple and preparing decorations. He was also appointed as Chairman of the newly formed Committee on Elementary Education. In 1946 he assisted in a National North American Teaching Campaign, attending a meeting regarding the campaign in New Orleans and speaking at public meetings, and also giving talks in Jackson, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee, when returning to Evanston from the meeting. He spoke at a public meeting held in Denver as part of the Campaign in March 1946. In October 1946 he spoke in Minneapolis. In 1947 he spoke on the Faith at the First Presbyterian Church in his hometown of Evanston, as part of a program on Comparative Religions. In 1948 Carl established an art studio in Chicago with his son, Harlan, which produced scratchboard drawings for advertising agencies.

In 1950 Carl was appointed to a Committee responsible for organizing the commemoration of the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb. In 1953 a Bahá'í Calendar featuring illustrations of the Temple grounds by Carl was published. In August 1953 Carl recited a prayer at a memorial for Siegfried Schopflocher at the House of Worship. In 1954 another Calendar featuring Carl's illustrations of Mt. Carmel avenue was published. In 1955 a book for children featuring stories from The Dawn-Breakers and illustrations by Carl was published. In 1957 another Calendar featuring illustrations of the House of Worship by Carl was published.

Carl Scheffler died on May 17, 1962, and the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land issued the following statement:

"Grieved passing much loved Carl Scheffler steadfast devoted tireless servant Master early days Faith America stop Outstanding services Temple Teaching administrative fields period beloved Guardian's ministry unforgettable stop Convey deepest sympathy family assure ardent prayers Holy Shrines."

Carl was survived by his wife, May Thurn, who died on February 19, 1970, and their two children, Harlan C. and Betty (later de Araujo), both of whom were active Bahá'ís.

Comments

Comments

MAY 17. ON THIS DATE IN 2008, BRIGITTE LUNDBLADE, WHO HAD PIONEERED TO SWEDEN, DENMARK AND ESTONIA AND BEEN NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE SHETLAND ISLANDS, DIED.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 17. On this date in 2008, Brigitte Lundblade, who had pioneered to Sweden, Denmark and Estonia and been named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands, died.

Brigitte Hasselblatt was born on January 21, 1923, into a Baltic German family in Tallinn, Estonia. During World War II, the Hasselblatt family was evacuated to Germany, and after the war Brigitte moved to England, where she became a Bahá'í at a summer school in 1950.

In 1953 Brigitte settled in the Shetland Islands, a territory named by Shoghi Effendi in connection with the Ten Year Crusade, and in doing so became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1956 Brigitte went on Pilgrimage and met Shoghi Effendi, who told her to introduce the Bahá'ís Faith to Estonia. Because it was impossible to go to the Soviet Union at that time, Brigitte chose to pioneer to Finland instead.

While in Finland Brigitte married Milton Lundblade, an American Bahá'í of Swedish descent. In 1961 they pioneered again, this time to Denmark, where there son Laurence was born. Because Milton was unable to find work there they soon had to move to the United States. For the next several years Brigitte worked as a school nurse in California. In 1963, their daughter Luise was born in Downey, California.

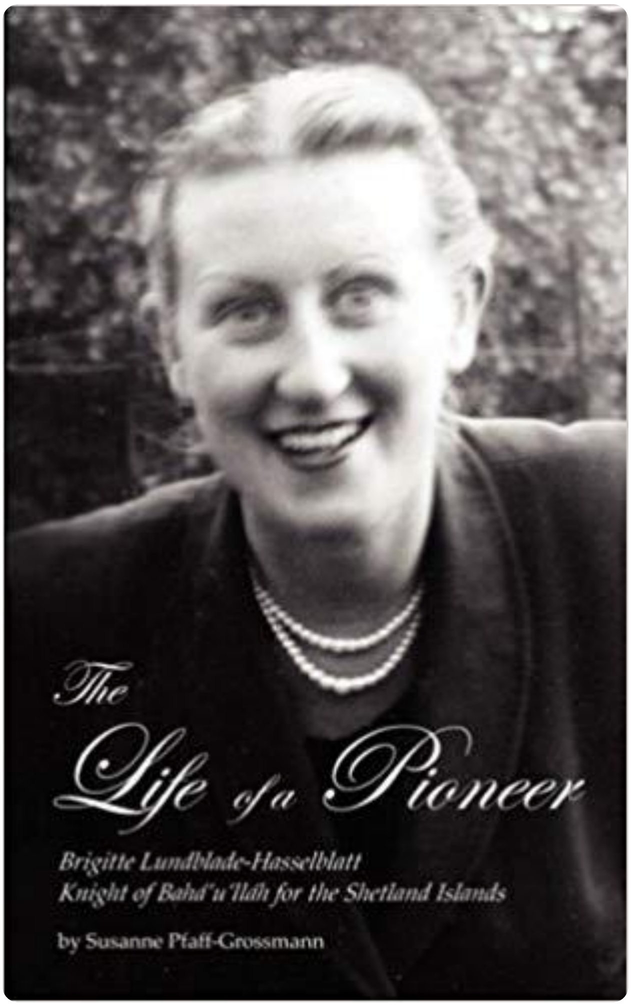
After her children were grown and her husband had died, Brigitte moved back to Finland as a pioneer in 1984, still waiting for an opportunity to return to Estonia in accordance with Shoghi Effendi's wishes. Her chance finally came in 1988.

Although a handful of people, predominantly Esperantists, had become Bahá'ís in Estonia prior to Brigitte's arrival, her flat in Tallinn quickly became the center of Bahá'í activity in the country. She was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States in 1993 and remained a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Estonia after it was formed as a separate body in 1999.

On the advice of the Universal House of Justice, she retired in 2006 after many years of service.

Brigitte devoted her final years to writing her memoirs with assistance from a friend, Susanne Pfaff-Grossman. "The Life of a Pioneer" was originally published in German and was then translated into English by Brigitte herself.

Brigitte died on May 17, 2008 and is buried in her native Tallinn.


The
Life of a Pioneer
Brigitte Lundblade-Hasselblatt
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Shetland Islands
by Susanne Pfaff-Grossmann

Comments

MAY 17. ON THIS DATE IN 2017, FIRUZ KAZEMZADEH, RETIRED PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF HISTORY AT YALE UNIVERSITY WHO SERVED ON THE NSA OF THE US FROM 1963 TO 2000, DIED AT THE AGE OF 92. HE WAS BORN IN MOSCOW, USSR, TO A RUSSIAN MOTHER AND IRANIAN FATHER EMPLOYED AT THE IRANIAN EMBASSY IN MOSCOW.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 17. On this date in 2017, Firuz Kazemzadeh, retired professor emeritus of history at Yale University who served on the NSA of the US from 1963 to 2000, died at the age of 92. He was born in Moscow, USSR, to a Russian mother and Iranian father employed at the Iranian embassy in Moscow.

Firuz Kazemzadeh was born in Moscow on October 27, 1924, to an Iranian father and a Russian mother. His father served in the Iranian embassy in Moscow. After completing his primary and secondary education in Moscow, Kazemzadeh (then aged 16) and his family moved to Iran. In 1944, during World War II, he travelled from Tehran to the United States and entered Stanford University, graduating in 1946 and obtaining an MA in 1947. In 1950 Kazemzadeh received a Ph.D. in Russian history from Harvard University.

Kazemzadeh taught at Harvard from 1954 to 1956, then moved to Yale where he was professor of history until his retirement as professor emeritus in 1992. While at Yale, he also served as Master of Davenport College. He was the author and co-author of a number of books on the history of Russia and Iran, as well as numerous articles and reviews for authoritative scholarly publications.

Between May 15, 1998 and May 14, 2003, Kazemzadeh served as a Commissioner on the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, first appointed to this position in 1998 by President Bill Clinton, and in 2001, reappointed by US Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle.

Kazemzadeh was an adherent of the Bahá'í Faith and, from 1963 to 2000, served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.

Firuz Kazemzadeh died, aged 92, on May 17, 2017.

FIRUZ KAZEMZADEH
SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, NAT'L

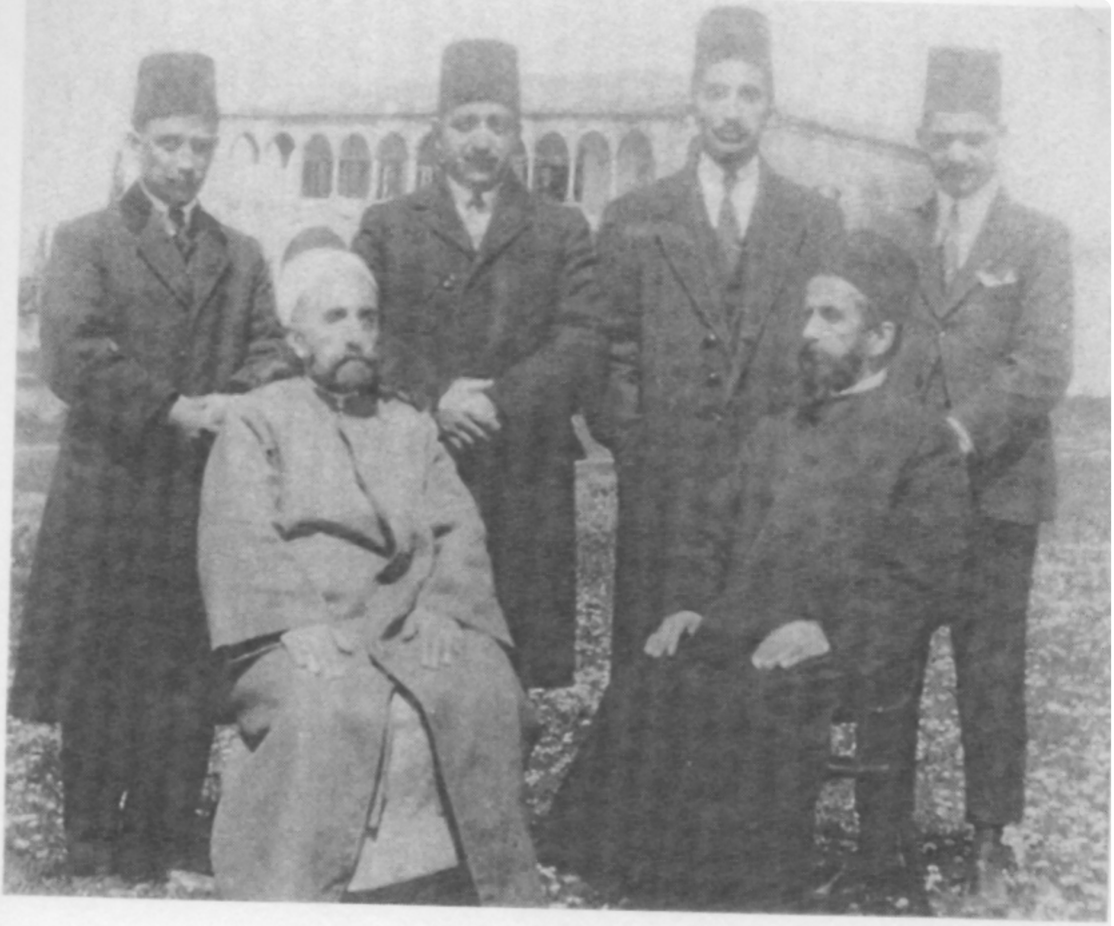
Comments

MAY 17. ON THIS DATE IN 1886, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S DAUGHTER FURÚGHIYYIH MARRIED SIYYID 'ALÍ, AN AFNÁN. SIYYID 'ALÍ SIDED WITH MÍRZÁ MUHAMMAD-'ALÍ IN HIS CONFLICT WITH 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, AND 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ REFERRED TO HIM AS 'SIYYID MUTIMARID' (REBELLIOUS SIYYID). HE DIED IN 'AKKÁ IN 1916.

May 17. On this date in 1886, Bahá'u'lláh's daughter Furúghiyyih married Siyyid 'Alí, an Afnán. Siyyid 'Alí sided with Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí in his conflict with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to him as 'Siyyid Mutimarid' (rebellious Siyyid). He died in 'Akká in 1916.

In 1928, Shoghi Effendi's sister Ruhangiz, the granddaughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá through his daughter Zia Khanum and his son-in-law Mirza Hadi Shirazi, would marry Nayer Afnan, Siyyid 'Alí's son. The marriage took place in 'Abdu'l-Bahá former home, where his sister, Bahíyyih Khánum officiated at the wedding in the presence of Munírih Khánum, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's widow, and other members of the family and of the community.

By the time of his death in 1957, Shoghi Effendi had declared all of his siblings and first cousins Covenant-breakers, using the marriage of Ruhangiz to Nayer Afnan and of Mehrangiz to Hassan Afnan as pretexts for their expulsions.



Standing (L to R): The grandsons of Baha'u'llah: Amin Ullah Bahai, Shua Ullah Behai, Mousa Bahai, Salah Bahai.
Seated (L to R): Mohammed Ali Bahai and Badi Ullah Bahai, sons of Baha'u'llah and his second wife Mahd-i-'Ulya.

Comments

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1910, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ADDRESSED CHARLES MASON REMEY AND HOWARD C. STRUVEN, THE FIRST BAHÁ'ÍS TO CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE WORLD, ON THE DAY OF THEIR DEPARTURE FROM HIS PRESENCE.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1910, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed Charles Mason Remey and Howard C. Struven, the first Bahá'ís to circumnavigate the world, on the day of their departure from his presence.

Talk No. 4 — Haifa, May 18, 1910.

These words of Abdul-Baba were addressed to Mr. Charles Mason Remey and Mr. Howard C. Struven on the day of their departure from his presence:

"In fact, you have shown forth a wonderful devotion; you left the West and came to the furthermost part of Asia. On your journey you had to pass through hard experiences and difficulties; yet the confirmations of God enabled you to spread the Cause and to raise the summons of the Kingdom in all regions. The Sun of Truth shall send forth its rays, the breeze of favor shall pass over and the rain of mercy shall be sent down upon the seeds which you have scattered and there shall be gathered and collected many harvests. The results shall indeed be magnificent and glorious; some of them you shall soon witness with your own eyes.

"Now, when you go back to America you must circulate in detail all the incidents and news about your vast trip and inform them fully of the works achieved successfully throughout the different countries.

"Now you have to rest and repose for some time and let your strength and breath be renewed. When a bird has been soaring in the air for a long time, it has to come down and rest for a while; after a long walk one must be seated and take some rest.

"I pray and supplicate at the Divine Threshold to confirm and aid you in all conditions, and that the seeds scattered may grow rapidly and form a charming plantation."

After giving instructions to some Persian pilgrims who were leaving on the same day, Abdul-Baha arose and embraced them all one by one. Some were crying, the tears rolling down their cheeks.

"Good-by!" he said to all.

Comments

Original Index: 106 | Current Position: 121

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1926, SHOGHI EFFENDI[WROTE "I STRONGLY URGE YOU TO DEVOTE, WHILE YOU ARE PURSUING YOUR STUDIES, AS MUCH TIME AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN TO A THOROUGH STUDY OF THE HISTORY AND TEACHINGS OF OUR BELOVED CAUSE. THIS IS THE PREREQUISITE OF A FUTURE SUCCESSFUL CAREER OF SERVICE TO THE...

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote "I strongly urge you to devote, while you are pursuing your studies, as much time as you possibly can to a thorough study of the history and Teachings of our Beloved Cause. This is the prerequisite of a future successful career of service to the Bahá'í Faith in which I hope and pray you will distinguish yourself in the days to come."

2238. I strongly urge you to devote, while you are pursuing your studies, as much time as you possibly can to a thorough study of the history and Teachings of our Beloved Cause. This is the prerequisite of a future successful career of service to the Bahá'í Faith in which I hope and pray you will distinguish yourself in the days to come.

(In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter dated 18 May 1926 written on his behalf to an individual believer)

Comments

Original Index: 107 | Current Position: 122

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1941, YVONNE LIEGOIS CUELLAR, A FRENCH WOMAN MARRIED TO ARTURO CUELLAR ECHAZU, A BOLIVIAN ARMY OFFICER, BECAME A BAHÁ'Í IN BOLIVIA. SHOGHI EFFENDI CALLED HER THE "MOTHER OF BOLIVIA". ARTURO CUELLAR WOULD LATER BECOME A BAHÁ'Í IN 1946 THROUGH HIS WIFE'S EFFORTS.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

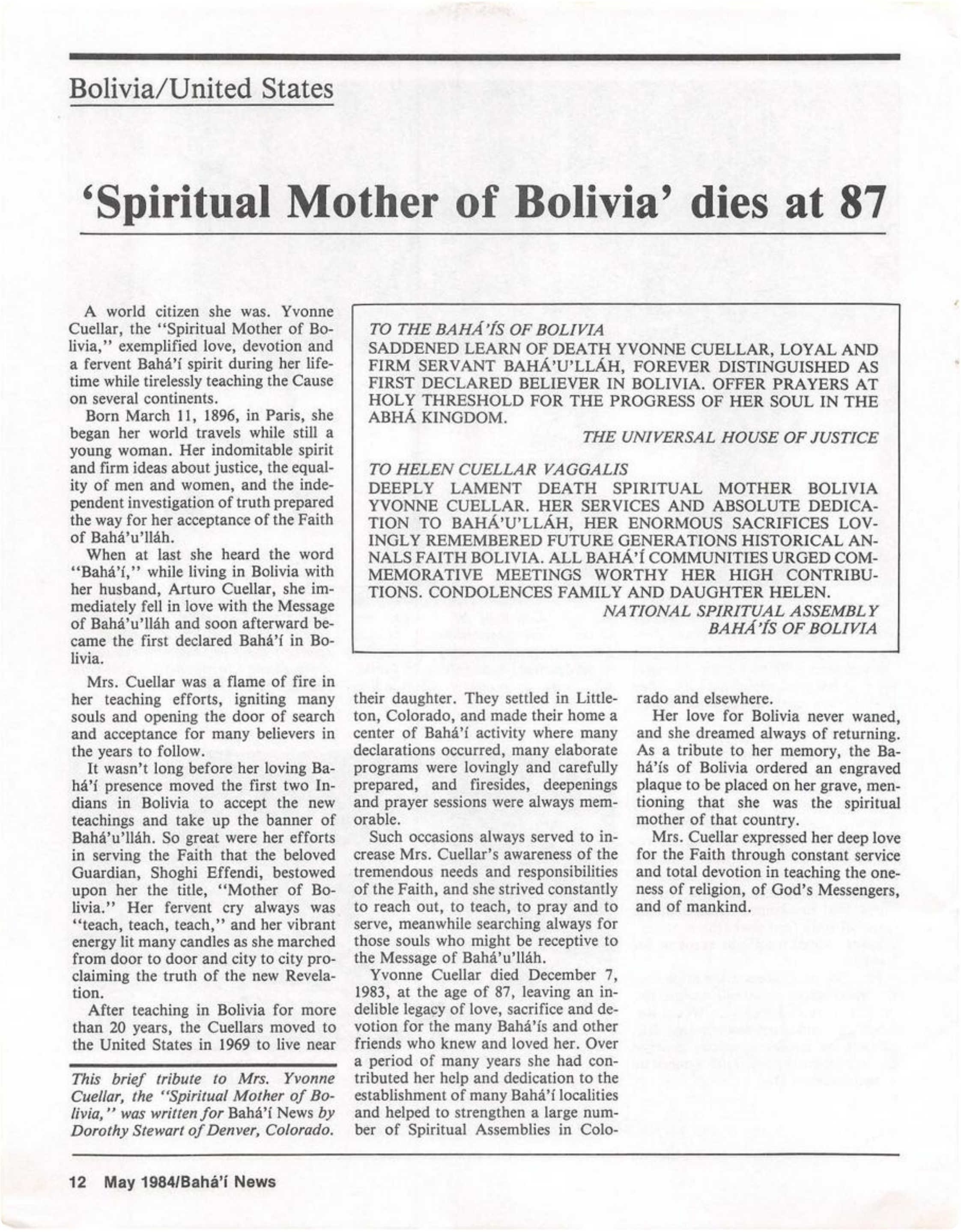
May 18. On this date in 1941, Yvonne Liegois Cuellar, a French woman married to Arturo Cuellar Echazu, a Bolivian army officer, became a Bahá'í in Bolivia. Although Marina Núñez del Prado was the first Bolivian to become a Bahá'í, on February 2, 1941, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. Shoghi Effendi called her the "Mother of Bolivia". Arturo Cuellar would later become a Bahá'í in 1946 through his wife's efforts.

Born in France on March 11, 1896, Yvonne Cuellar and her husband, Arturo Cuellar, lived in La Paz, Bolivia, in the 1940s where they had an American boarder, Eleanor Adler, who was first Bahá'í pioneer to Bolivia. Both she and her husband became Bahá'ís and helped establish the first Baha'i community of La Paz.

Yvonne Liegois Cuellar became a Bahá'í on May 18, 1941. Although Marina Núñez del Prado, a celebrated sculptor, was the first Bolivian to become a Bahá'í, on February 2, 1941, she did not remain active, so Yvonne Cuellar is recognized as the first Bahá'í in Bolivia. Shoghi Effendi called her the "Mother of Bolivia". Arturo Cuellar would later become a Bahá'í in 1946 through his wife's efforts.

In 1953, the Cuellars moved to the United States but returned to Bolivia in 1956 at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of that country. In 1958 she traveled to France to help establish the inaugural National Spiritual Assembly, which was dissolved two years later through reports of Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi by the authority of the Custodians due to a majority of the Assembly's acceptance of Charles Mason Remey's claim to being the second Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith subsequent to the death of Shoghi Effendi.

In 1968 the Cuellars once again moved to the United States. Yvonne Cullear died in Littleton, Colorado on December 7, 1983.



Bolivia/United States

'Spiritual Mother of Bolivia' dies at 87

A world citizen she was. Yvonne Cuellar, the "Spiritual Mother of Bolivia," exemplified love, devotion and a fervent Bahá'í spirit during her lifetime while tirelessly teaching the Cause on several continents.

Born March 11, 1896, in Paris, she began her world travels while still a young woman. Her indomitable spirit and firm ideas about justice, the equality of men and women, and the independent investigation of truth prepared the way for her acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

When at last she heard the word "Bahá'í," while living in Bolivia with her husband, Arturo Cuellar, she immediately fell in love with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and soon afterward became the first declared Bahá'í in Bolivia.

Mrs. Cuellar was a flame of fire in her teaching efforts, igniting many souls and opening the door of search and acceptance for many believers in the years to follow.

It wasn't long before her loving Bahá'í presence moved the first two Indians in Bolivia to accept the new teachings and take up the banner of Bahá'u'lláh. So great were her efforts in serving the Faith that the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, bestowed upon her the title, "Mother of Bolivia." Her fervent cry always was "teach, teach, teach," and her vibrant energy lit many candles as she marched from door to door and city to city proclaiming the truth of the new Revelation.

After teaching in Bolivia for more than 20 years, the Cuellars moved to the United States in 1969 to live near their daughter. They settled in Littleton, Colorado, and made their home a center of Bahá'í activity where many declarations occurred, many elaborate programs were lovingly and carefully prepared, and firesides, deepenings and prayer sessions were always memorable.

Such occasions always served to increase Mrs. Cuellar's awareness of the tremendous needs and responsibilities of the Faith, and she strived constantly to reach out, to teach, to pray and to serve, meanwhile searching always for those souls who might be receptive to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Yvonne Cuellar died December 7, 1983, at the age of 87, leaving an indelible legacy of love, sacrifice and devotion for the many Bahá'ís and other friends who knew and loved her. Over a period of many years she had contributed her help and dedication to the establishment of many Bahá'í localities and helped to strengthen a large number of Spiritual Assemblies in Colorado and elsewhere.

Her love for Bolivia never waned, and she dreamed always of returning. As a tribute to her memory, the Bahá'ís of Bolivia ordered an engraved plaque to be placed on her grave, mentioning that she was the spiritual mother of that country.

Mrs. Cuellar expressed her deep love for the Faith through constant service and total devotion in teaching the oneness of religion, of God's Messengers, and of mankind.

TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF BOLIVIA

SADDENED LEARN OF DEATH YVONNE CUELLAR, LOYAL AND FIRM SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, FOREVER DISTINGUISHED AS FIRST DECLARED BELIEVER IN BOLIVIA. OFFER PRAYERS AT HOLY THRESHOLD FOR THE PROGRESS OF HER SOUL IN THE ABHÁ KINGDOM.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

TO HELEN CUELLAR VAGGALIS

DEEPLY LAMENT DEATH SPIRITUAL MOTHER BOLIVIA YVONNE CUELLAR. HER SERVICES AND ABSOLUTE DEDICATION TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HER ENORMOUS SACRIFICES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED FUTURE GENERATIONS HISTORICAL ANNALS FAITH BOLIVIA. ALL BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES URGED COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS WORTHY HER HIGH CONTRIBUTIONS. CONDOLENCES FAMILY AND DAUGHTER HELEN.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
BAHÁ'ÍS OF BOLIVIA

This brief tribute to Mrs. Yvonne Cuellar, the "Spiritual Mother of Bolivia," was written for Bahá'í News *by Dorothy Stewart of Denver, Colorado.*

Comments

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1948, A LETTER WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI TO THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED STATES STATED "'DEPRIVATION OF VOTING RIGHTS' AND 'DEPRIVATION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY' ARE REALLY THE SAME THING."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1948, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States stated (also here) "'Deprivation of voting rights' and 'deprivation of membership in the Bahá'í Community' are really the same thing."

To All National Spiritual Assemblies

July 16, 1961

As you know, the beloved Guardian for a number of years before his ascension permitted the various National Assemblies to apply the **extreme punishment of deprivation of voting rights in cases where believers continued to disobey an important decision of a National Assembly, or in cases where the conduct of an individual continuously and flagrantly violated Bahá'í standards to a point where the good name of the Faith was placed in jeopardy.**

At various times the beloved Guardian sent communications to National Assemblies instructing them and guiding them in the application of this authority, which he felt should be invoked only as a last resort, and after repeated warnings to the individual concerned.

In the belief that they will be helpful to all National Assemblies in carrying out the spirit as well as the letter of the beloved Guardian's instructions on this important subject, and because they contain such a clear exposition of the status of Bahá'ís deprived of their voting rights, we are sharing with you the following paragraphs from a communication sent by him to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on May 18, 1948:

The Guardian considers there are **three conditions, so to speak, in regard to Bahá'í status or lack of it:** a member of the Bahá'í Faith, **in good standing,** possessed of all his administrative rights; a member of the Faith who is being **severely punished**-either because of flagrant disobedience of some very important injunction of the National

Assembly, or because of conduct extremely detrimental to the good name of the Faith, which he has not rectified-**through having his voting and administrative rights suspended;** and a person who is **excommunicated by the Guardian** because of disloyalty and enmity to the Faith. "Deprivation of voting rights" and "deprivation of membership in the Bahá'í Community" are really the same thing.

No contribution should be accepted from a person deprived of his voting rights. He is not eligible for election to Bahá'í bodies, cannot attend the administrative gatherings such as elections or Nineteen Day Feasts. However he can attend Bahá'í meetings as he is not excommunicated.

In connection with the above two paragraphs **the Guardian does not want them published in** *Bahá'í News* **or any statement whatsoever issued in connection with this matter.** Your Assembly can take action as occasion demands. As he has already stated, he considers that National Assemblies must strongly guard against this marked tendency of laying down new rules and regulations all the time, which he considers unnecessary and injurious. **In the end it will dampen the zeal and quench the spontaneity of the believers, and give the impression that the Bahá'í Faith is crystallizing into set forms.** Principles there must be, but they must be applied with wisdom to each case that arises, not every case covered, before it arises, by a codified set of rules. This is the whole spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's system: rigid conformity to great essential laws, elasticity, and even a certain necessary element of diversity, in secondary matters.

The deprivation of a person's voting rights should only be re-sorted to when absolutely necessary, and a National Spiritual Assembly should always feel reluctant to impose this very heavy sanction which is a severe punishment. Of course sometimes, to protect the Cause, it must be done, but he feels that if the believer so deprived makes an effort to mend his ways, rectifies his mistake, or sincerely seeks forgiveness, every effort should be made to help him and enable him to re-establish himself in the Community as a member in good standing.

Please note carefully the Guardian's words indicating that he did not wish to have this material published in Bahá'í News, and his further instruction that no statement whatsoever should be made by the National Assembly in connection with this question. In other words, his wish was that each case be considered individually in the light of the general principles which he gave to the National Assembly for its guidance.

With warm Bahá'í love,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

Comments

Original Index: 110 | Current Position: 124

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, RUHANIYYIH RUTH MOFFETT ARRIVED IN ISRAEL. SHE DESCRIBED THE FOUNDING OF THAT COUNTRY SIX YEARS PREVIOUS AS "A MOST REMARKABLE BLOODLESS REVOLUTION OCCURRED, WHEN 4,000,000 MOSLEMS FLED AND 1,000,000 JEWS MARCHED IN AND BEGAN TILLING THEIR ANCESTRAL SOIL, AND ..."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1954, Ruhaniyyih Ruth Moffett arrived in Israel. She described the founding of that country six years previous as "a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world" youngest democracy --"" nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow". Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!"

At 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18, the Royal Sabena glided along the runway to the first stop in Brussels, Belgium, after the long transoceanic flight. There the same plane was reconditioned and flew over Europe, and Brindisi, the tip of the heel of Italy, over the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas, and arrived in Athens, where the plane was again reconditioned, and arrived at 10:30 p.m., May 18, 1954 at the airport at Jappa, Tel Aviv, Israel. This is the modern miracle, to travel thousands of miles from Chicago to Tel Aviv in only thirty nine hours!

As the Royal Sabena plane winged its way toward Israel, Ruhaniyyih wondered how it would look in comparison with when she saw it before - a desert land filled with rocks, sand, thorny bushes and confusion, and where everyone seemed to be against his neighbor. As the approaching lights of the Holy Land again came into view, her heart was filled with joyful and reverential expectancy and she thought to the words of the song, "Israel - The Land of Promise Welcomes You".

As she gazed meditatively at the approaching lights of the Holy Land, the panorama of history seemed to unroll before her mind: of how Palestine was peopled by cave dwellers in about 3500 B.C.; of how Abraham was led to this land, and God made a covenant with Him, "that in the seed of Abraham shall all the nations of the earth be blest"; of the

Cananites, and later how Moses led the Israelites out of bondage, and for forty years in the wilderness, and Joshua led them to the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; how the Jewish people built up the land but turned away from God to gods of their own making. Then Saul became the first king and established a civic kingdom, but he died. David became the king unifying the kingdom and calling them to return to God: and David died and was called to his fathers. Solomon, his son became King. He expanded the kingdom, and to this day, the glory and unity of his kingdom is still sung. But Solomon died and the tribes became divided. Then the Assyrians in 1722 B.C., destroyed Damascus and Israel and took the tribes into captivity, and they became scattered. After the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C. the remaining tribes of Judah were taken into Babylonia and scattered. Alexander the Great captured Palestine in 332 B.C. The coming of Jusus, the Christ, had a profound effect on the history of this land, which became a noted center of pilgrimages.

Under the Moslem dominion from 636 A.D. for four centuries, and the long period of the Christian Crusades, one lasting 100 years, there was much destruction and a little progress. It was under the control of the Ottoman Turks from 1516 until the first World War, then it cecame a mandate of Great Britain, under the League of Nations. "The White Paper" gave the promise that the doors of Palestine would again open to her people. Many outbreaks of violence have occurred between the Jews and Arabs, which have caused this land to become on of the danger spots of the world. After World War II, the Jews began returning in large numbers, until today there are about 1,465,000 Jews, gathered from 75 countries, 125,000 Moslems, 40,000 Christians, and 16,000 Druzes in Israel.

On May 14, 1948, a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world" youngest democracy --"" nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow". Phonex-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!

Ruth J. Moffett was born on January 19, 1880 and met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on a train platform in Chicago in 1912. After attending one of his lectures, she became a Bahá'í and became active in service in 1919. Her teaching efforts took her throughout the Americas, Europe, Egypt and the Near East. The Greatest Holy Leaf (Bahiyyih Khanum) named her Ruhaniyyih, conoting spirituality, joy and beauty. Ruth J. Moffett died on July 5, 1978.

Comments

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1972, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SENT A MESSAGE TO THE BAHÁ'Í UNITY CONFERENCE IN GANADO, ARIZONA.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1972, the Universal House of Justice sent a message to the Bahá'í Unity Conference in Ganado, Arizona.

Message to Bahá'í Unity Conference —

Ganado, Arizona

18 May 1972

Bahá'í Unity Conference

Ganado, Arizona

Beloved Friends,

Praise be to the Almighty that you have gathered in that beautiful spot in a spirit of love and harmony for the purpose of strengthening the bonds of unity between yourselves and among all men.

The All-Wise Creator of earth and heaven has from the beginning which has no beginning sent to His peoples Divine Messengers to guide them to the Straight Path. These Wise Ones have come to establish the unity of the Kingdom in human hearts. This great evolutionary process of building the organic unity of the human race has entered a new stage with this mighty message of Bahá'u'lláh. His voice is the voice of the Great Spirit. His love for human kind is the force of the New Age.

He who sends the rain, who causes the sun and the stars to shine, the rivers to flow, the winds to blow and the earth to give forth her bounties has in this Great Day sent to all mankind Bahá'u'lláh. It is this Great One who has opened the door of divine knowledge to every soul. It is His teachings that will establish world unity and bring about universal peace.

The people of the world are the tools in His hand. They must strive to understand His message and to walk in the path of His divine guidance. Every human being is responsible in this day to seek the truth for himself and thereafter to live according to that wise counsel. The old ones have all longed for this sweet message. Praise God that you have found it.

Now awakened to new wisdom, now guided to the straight path, now illumined with this mighty message, strive you day and night to guide and assist the thirsty ones in all lands to the ever-flowing fountain, the wandering ones to this fortress of certainty, the ignorant ones to this source of knowledge and the seekers to that One for whom their hearts long.

May your consultation reach so high a level of endeavor and purpose that the Great One will open before your faces the doors of the paradise of wisdom and love and cause the light of the Abhá Beauty to shine in your midst.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Universal House of Justice

Comments

Original Index: 112 | Current Position: 126

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1990, AN INDIVIDUAL WROTE THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ASKING A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS, INCLUDING AN INQUIRY ABOUT 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S ASSERTION THAT "THE CENTURY HAS COME WHEN ALL RELIGIONS SHALL BE UNIFIED."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1990, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice asking a number of questions, including an inquiry about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's assertion that "The century has come when all religions shall be unified."

The Unity of Religions in This Century, Jews and the Crucifixion, and the Sacrifice of Ishmael by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1990-11-06 THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE Department of the Secretariat

6 November 1990

Comments

[–][deleted]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(0 children)

Thank you 🙏

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, THE UHJ REPLIED TO AN INDIVIDUAL ASKING FOR AN "OUTLINE WHICH ASPECTS OF CURRENT BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION ARE PERMANENT..."; WHEN BAHÁ'Í REVIEW "WILL NO LONGER BE NEEDED"; AND "ACCESS BY INDIVIDUALS TO SOURCE MATERIALS HELD IN THE BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1995, the Universal House of Justice replied to an individual asking for an "outline which aspects of current Bahá'í Administration are permanent and which are subject to change"; when Bahá'í Review "will no longer be needed"; and "Concerning access by individuals to source materials held in the Bahá'í International Archives."

18 May 1995

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has considered your email message of 4 April 1995 and has instructed us to convey to you the following.

The House of Justice appreciates your having shared with it your thoughts and enthusiasm about electronic discussion of the Teachings. The exchange of ideas related to the Cause in electronic discussion groups is indeed a very positive development - one full of great potential for a growing spread and understanding of the Faith - and the House of Justice is pleased you are benefiting from your participation. In all such discussions a sound knowledge of the Bahá'í Teachings is a powerful touchstone, one enabling those so engaged to assess the value of what is being set forth.

Your message suggests that the House of Justice "outline which aspects of current Bahá'í Administration are permanent and which are subject to change". You have made this suggestion in the light of your concern that some of the ideas you have seen expressed for making the administration work better might be inappropriate. The House of Justice judges that for it to make such a categorization would not be fruitful. The believers' own study of the writings, especially those of Shoghi Effendi and including the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice, should enable them to arrive at an ever greater understanding of the essentials of the Administrative Order. The workings of the community, as you will appreciate, are organic in nature and so is its growth. As time passes, the community expands, and conditions change, the House of Justice will make such adjustments and developments as are required. In so doing, the House of Justice takes cognizance of the conditions prevailing in the community and any views presented to it, reserving for itself the right of an unfettered decision in the manner described by Shoghi Effendi in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh". Its first consideration must always be to remain faithful to the revealed purpose of Bahá'u'lláh, as expounded and interpreted by Abdul -Baha and the Guardian.

Individual believers are entirely free to make their own recommendations for developments which they feel would be desirable, but the manner in which they do so is important, because this relates to fundamental principles of the functioning of Bahá'í society. On the one hand they may present their recommendations at the Nineteen Day Feast, or directly to their Local or National Spiritual Assembly, or even the to the Universal House of Justice. On the other hand, they are free to discuss these matters informally among themselves. Any actions, however, which savour of factionalism, of mobilizing pressure, or of stirring up contention among the Bahá'ís would be an inadmissible intrusion of the spirit of partisan politics into Bahá'í community life.

In general the House of Justice advises the friends to be less concerned with correcting what they conceive to be present imperfections in the administrative system, than with thoroughly understanding the principles which underline it, as clearly expounded by the Guardian, and with perfecting the application of those principles in practice.

With regard to your question about review requirements for works related to the Faith written or published by Bahá'ís, no decision has been taken as to when this practice will no longer be needed. Concerning access by individuals to source materials held in the Bahá'í International Archives, incoming requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, as the gradually expanding facilities of the Bahá'í World Centre permit.

The House of Justice wishes us to assure you that it will offer prayers in the Holy Shrines on your behalf and as requested. May your insight and perception of the realities of the Faith be a constant joy and source of development to you.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat

Comments

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN 1995, WILLIAM R. FOSTER, A PIONEER TO LIBERIA AND MOROCCO, DIED. THE FOSTER BAHÁ'Í SCHOOL IN NEW JERSEY IS NAMED AFTER HIM.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in 1995, William R. Foster, a pioneer to Liberia and Morocco, died. The Foster Bahá'í School in New Jersey is named after him.

Comments

MAY 18. ON THIS DATE IN IN 1995, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER REGARDING "SUGGESTIONS ABOUT CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER" THAT HAD BEEN MADE ON THE TALISMAN DISCUSSION GROUP.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 18. On this date in in 1995, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to an individual believer regarding "Suggestions about changes in the Administrative Order" that had been made on the Talisman discussion group.

18 May 1995 Dear Bahá'í Friend, The Universal House of Justice has considered your email message of 4 April 1995 and has instructed us to convey to you the following.

The House of Justice appreciates your having shared with it your thoughts and enthusiasm about electronic discussion of the Teachings. The exchange of ideas related to the Cause in electronic discussion groups is indeed a very positive development - one full of great potential for a growing spread and understanding of the Faith - and the House of Justice is pleased you are benefiting from your participation. In all such discussions a sound knowledge of the Bahá'í Teachings is a powerful touchstone, one enabling those so engaged to assess the value of what is being set forth.

Your message suggests that the House of Justice "outline which aspects of current Bahá'í Administration are permanent and which are subject to change". You have made this suggestion in the light of your concern that some of the ideas you have seen expressed for making the administration work better might be inappropriate. The House of Justice judges that for it to make such a categorization would not be fruitful. The believers' own study of the writings, especially those of Shoghi Effendi and including the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice , should enable them to arrive at an ever greater understanding of the essentials of the Administrative Order. The workings of the community, as you will appreciate, are organic in nature and so is its growth. As time passes, the community expands, and conditions change, the House of Justice will make such adjustments and developments as are required. In so doing, the House of Justice takes cognizance of the conditions prevailing in the community and any views presented to it, reserving for itself the right of an unfettered decision in the manner described by Shoghi Effendi in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh" . Its first consideration must always be to remain faithful to the revealed purpose of Bahá'u'lláh, as expounded and interpreted by Abdul -Baha and the Guardian.

Individual believers are entirely free to make their own recommendations for developments which they feel would be desirable, but the manner in which they do so is important, because this relates to fundamental principles of the functioning of Bahá'í society. On the one hand they may present their recommendations at the Nineteen Day Feast, or directly to their Local or National Spiritual Assembly, or even the to the Universal House of Justice. On the other hand, they are free to discuss these matters informally among themselves. Any actions, however, which savour of factionalism, of mobilizing pressure, or of stirring up contention among the Bahá'ís would be an inadmissible intrusion of the spirit of partisan politics into Bahá'í community life.

In general the House of Justice advises the friends to be less concerned with correcting what they conceive to be present imperfections in the administrative system, than with thoroughly understanding the principles which underline it, as clearly expounded by the Guardian, and with perfecting the application of those principles in practice.

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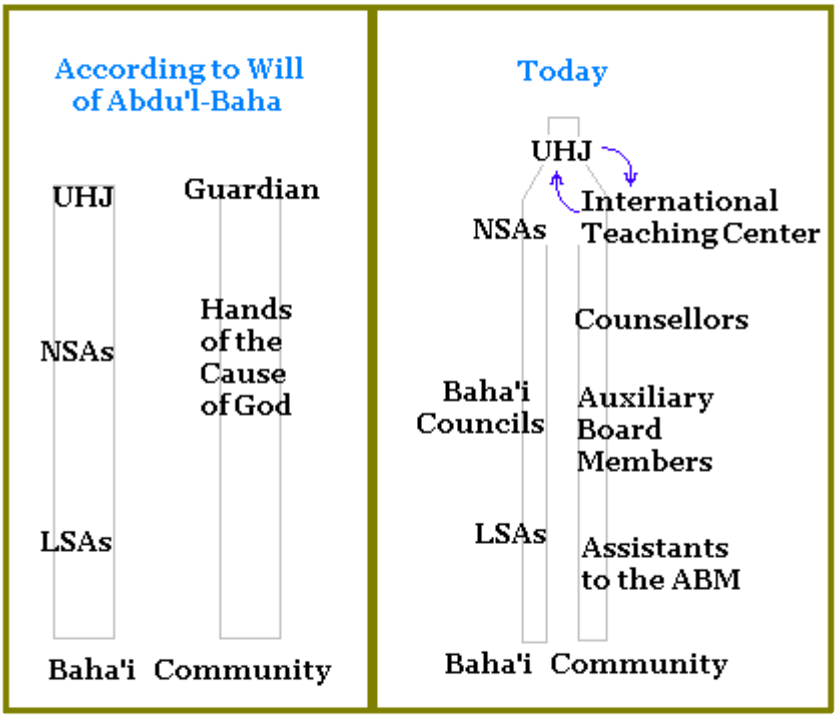
The House of Justice wishes us to assure you that it will offer prayers in the Holy Shrines on your behalf and as requested. May your insight and perception of the realities of the Faith be a constant joy and source of development to you.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

For Department of the Secretariat


According to Will of Abdu'l-Baha
UHJ
Guardian
NSAs
Hands of the Cause of God
LSAs
Baha'i Community
Today
UHJ
International Teaching Center
NSAs
Counsellors
Baha'i Councils
Auxiliary Board Members
LSAs
Assistants to the ABM
Baha'i Community

Comments

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1874, JOHN ESSLEMONT WAS BORN.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

He was a prominent British Bahá'í from Scotland who authored the well-known introductory book on the Bahá'í Faith, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, which is still in circulation. He was named posthumously by Shoghi Effendi as the first Hand of the Cause he appointed, and as one of the Disciples of `Abdu'l-Bahá.

John Esslemont appears repeatedly at key points in Bahá'í history. For example, at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

John Esslemont died in Haifa on November 22, 1925.

John E Esslemont, 1912

Comments

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1927, JAMES NELSON, WHO WOULD BECOME A JUDGE WHO SERVED IN THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1977 TO 1999, WAS BORN.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 19. On this date in 1927, James Nelson, who would become a judge who served in the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States from 1977 to 1999, was born.

James Nelson was born in Los Angeles on May 19, 1927. He joined the Navy in 1945 before graduating High School, attending the graduation in his Navy uniform. He attended Stanford University for officer training but after meeting Dorothy at a YMCA camp he transferred to UCLA in 1946 so he could attend the same school as her. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1950 and married Dorothy, then served in the Navy Reserve.

In 1953 James completed a law degree at Loyola University. He became a Bahá'í in 1954 and the same year he began work as deputy district attorney of Los Angeles County. He served in the position until 1957 when he entered private practice. In 1965 he began working as a Juvenile Court Referee. Also in 1965 he chaired a Bahá'í meeting for the public in Temple City, California, at which the Bahá'í view on human rights was discussed, and he and Dorothy showed slides of the World Center at Big Bear Lake Summer School. In 1967 he began working as Judge Pro Tempore for the Los Angeles Superior Court. Ronald Reagan appointed him as a Judge on the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1968.

In 1972 James chaired a public meeting held by the Bahá'ís of Los Angeles County to commemorate Human Rights Day at which awards were given to individuals in the County who had been of service to mankind. In 1974 James and Dorothy spoke at the International Bahá'í Youth Conference in Hawaii on A New Era in Justice. In 1975 James opened a Bahá'í Family Life Conference held in San Francisco. In 1975 the Nelsons represented the Faith at a World Peace Through Law Conference. In 1977 James was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly.

By 1980 James was Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, and in 1980 he served as Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Municipal Court. In 1982 he participated in the Seventh Bahá'í Studies Conference with Dorothy, delivering a joint talk on the Bahá'í perspective on law, language, and ethics. In 1985 the Nelsons were apart of a Bahá'í delegation to an International Conference on Religious Liberty co-sponsored by the U.S. State Department. In December 1985 James acted as spokesperson at a ceremony at which President Ronald Reagan was presented with The Promise of World Peace, the Universal House of Justice's peace statement.

In 1989 Judge Nelson retired from the Los Angeles Municipal Court, although he occasionally worked as a Superior Court judge up until 1993. By 1990 James was serving as Vice-Chair of the National Assembly. He served on the body until 1999.

James died in the presence of family in 2011 following a family party. He had suffered a stroke a few years earlier.

James' wife Dorothy also had a successful legal career, serving on the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and as Dean of the School of Law at the University of Southern California, and was also a long-serving member of the National Assembly, serving on the body from 1969 to 2009.

They had a daughter, Lorna, and son, Frank.

Comments

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1974, THE NEW YORK TIMES CARRIED AN ARTICLE TITLED "THE BAHA'IS ON LONG ISLAND REFLECT THE CHANGING IMAGE OF THE SECT NATIONALLY."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 19. On this date in 1974, the New York Times carried an article titled "The Baha'is on Long Island Reflect the Changing Image of the Sect Nationally."

MANHASSET-In the living room of Mrs. David B. Thomas, 103 Andrew Road, Arabic letters in a black picture frame spell out a reference to the founder of her faith with the words: “O Thou, the Glory of the Most Glorious.”

On another wall is a symmetrical design of string netting, depicting harmony. In a discreet corner of a tastefully furnished traditional dining room there is a pamphlet rack.

Mrs. Thomas and her husband are members of the Baha'i's—a fast-growing independent worldwide religion, founded by Baha'u'llah, whose name means “Glory of God,” in the mid-19th century in Baghdad, Iraq.

Many of Mrs. Thomas's daytime hours are spent reading and studying her faith, organizing weekly “firesides” of the North Hempstead Spiritual Assembly or compiling her postconvention report as a member of the Eastern New York delegation to the annual Baha'i national’ convention held last month in Wilmette. Ill.

But she is not “typical” of an estimated 1,200 members of the faith in New York City and Long Island or some 100,000 of their co-religionists across the country.

Minorities Attracted

The American Baha'i image has changed, says Mrs. Thomas and other spokesmen. Today, the “typical” Baha'i in the United States is more likely to be black, Indian, Spanish-speaking or of Chinese descent than a white Nassau or Suffolk County suburbanite. He or she may be poorer than affluent Baha'i's of two decades ago, and young rather than middle-aged or grandparents.

“In 1948 to 1950,” Mrs. Thomas commented in an interview, “Baha'i's were well-positioned people. The financial situation in New York was well handled. Now —and this comes from a tenet of the faith—the extremes of wealth and poverty have been coming 'together."

Another Baha'i member, McCleary B. (Bunch) Washington, a black artist and writer living at 66 Stagg Street in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, commented:

"The white middle-class American today is actually a minority among Baha'i's here. I've been in the faith 10 years, and it's really very difficult to think about racial lines. We have people from Africa, the Caribbean, and a great many blacks, and Chinese."

Both Mrs. Thomas and Mr. Washington say their organized campaigns, called "Proclamations," of the faith, have met great respohse from blacks, Indians and other minorities in this country. The growth, they said is due to the teaching of Baha'u'llah (pronounced Baha-ol-lah) in behalf of world justice, human rights and equal rights for all individuals.

"He was the founder of the civil rights movement," Mrs. Thomas observed.

Last year, "The American Baha'i" reported that minorities had entered the faith "in large numbers." For example, nearly 8,000 rural blacks in the South became Baha'i's within a few weeks late. in 1970. Nearly 60 per cent of newcomers of all races are between the ages of 15 and 30, and most have had previous schooling in some major faith.

Principles of Oneness

The teachings of Baha'u'llah, Mrs. Thomas continued, are based upon principles of the oneness of God, the oneness of religion and the oneness of mankind. Baha'i's refer to their founder, as the "Manifestation of God" for the present day, a prophet ranking with Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddah, Zoroaster, Jesus and Muhammad.

"Many blacks and minorities have been responsive to its stress on equality. They have said in effect, 'This is the way I have always believed but could not find.

Baha'u'llah put it this way: 'This is the day of justice. Ye are all the branches of one tree and the leaves of one branch. Pride not yourselves that ye are members of one nation or one race, but pride yourselves rather in that ye are members of the human race.'"

The appeal to the young, she indicated, has been based on several factors—disillusionment with existing religions, a search for a unifying spiritual world force and, in some instances a discipline to overcome the drug habit.

"There are a great many youths who have come off drugs and become believers," Mrs. Thomas said, citing a young hospital' worker who developed so reliably after entering the faith that he was given a scholarship in hospital therapy at a local university.

“Young people are the life blood of the faith at this point,” Mr. Washington said. “When you are 22 or 23 and setting life goals, where could you find such a faith?

“We're often criticized because we're too idealistic,” he continued. “But these young people are idealistic, and free, and they want our idealism.”

Baha'u'llah was born Huseyn Ali on Nov. 12, 1817, the son of a government minister. He was imprisoned and eventually exiled for his religious teachings.

Baha'u'llah set down number of regulations for a healthy spiritual life.

Alcohol, Narcotics Banned

These included prohibitions against alcohol and narcotics, except for medical purposes. Cigarettes are regarded as “obnoxious” to the body. Devout Baha'is pray daily and, following a 19-month 19-day calendar, observe nine holy days and a lengthy springtime fast period between Mar. 2 and Mar. 20. The fast ‘period means that no food or drink is consumed between sunrise and sunset.

Baha'i holy days call attention to events in the life of both the prophet-founder and his advance “prophet-herald” known as the Bab, Arabic for “the Gate.” Like John the Baptist, the Bab foretold the coming of Baha'u'llah. He was killed in 1850 in Tabriz, Iran. Some 20,000 of the Bab's followers were martyred during the early history of the faith, according to Baha'i literature.

The international shrine of the Bab on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel, is a pilgrimage site for Baha'i's in 60,591 localities throughout the world.

In this country, the Baha'is, who have no formal churches and are likely to meet in homes or public meeting places, look to the domed Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette, Ill., as their national center.

The New York City Baha'i community was established in 1897 and the first center established January, 1898, by the late Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, Mr. Dodge later conducted meetings at his home, then at 64 Jay Avenue, Freeport, L. I., and members of the Dodge family have remained active Baha'i's since.

The main Baha'i activities in metropolitan New York of the first half of this century were centered in the New York City Spiritual Assembly. Local Baha'i communities are organized according to “spiritual assemblies,” each having a minimum of nine members. New York's assembly includes Brooklyn and Queens. It was not until the nineteen sixties that Baha'i's spread in Nassau and Suffolk in great numbers.

Today, according to Mrs. Thomas, there are seven Spiritual Assemblies, plus isolated believers, in the two counties.

“We've grown so fast I couldn't begin to give exact figures,” she explained. Particularly active, she said, are young Sahel grrups at Nassau Community College, State University of New York at Stony Brook, L. I., and Hofstra and Adelphi Universities, and Queens College.

One member of the faith on Long Island, Mrs: Ruhiyyih McComb, 8 Mott. Place, Glenwood Landing, L.I, is one of the few believers who met ‘Abdull-Baha, son, of the founder who carried on the faith. She net him in April, 1912, when he began a United States tour in New York.

Another noted Long Island Baha'i, H. Borrah Kavelin, former real estate man from Manhasset, became a member of the National Spiritual As sembly in Wilmette. Since 1963 he has been one of three Americans elected to the nine-member Universal House of Justice, in Haifa.

The Baha'is on Long Island Reflect the Changing Image of the Sect Nationally

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GREEK

Comments

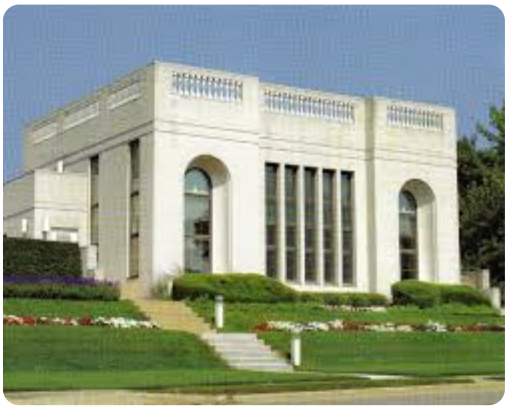
Original Index: 120 | Current Position: 133

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1994, THE UHJ WROTE A LETTER TO THE NSA OF THE U.S., WHICH WAS LATER ACCUSED OF "SPIN DOCTORING" ON THE LETTER "IN ORDER TO MAKE A MORE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON THE DELEGATES AND VISITORS TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 19. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to the NSA of the U.S., which was later accused of "spin doctoring" on the letter "in order to make a more favorable impression on the delegates and visitors to the National Convention."

Letter dated July 23, 1995 from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to "a Bahá'í Friend" published in *American Bahá'í* on July 30, 1995...



Comments

[–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(10 children)

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National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

July 23, 1995

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The National Spiritual Assembly appreciates your taking the time to share with it your impressions of the 86th National Convention and your ideas for stimulating the growth and development of the American Bahá'í community. At its June meeting, the National Assembly discussed the points raised in your May 11, 1995 letter and offers the following responses for your consideration.

The National Assembly regrets that your experience as a visitor to the National Convention did not leave you with the same "spiritual lift" that you have experienced from other National Conventions. Most disappointing was that you attribute this to "spin doctoring" done by the National Spiritual Assembly on the May 19, 1994 letter of the Universal House of Justice, in order to make a more favorable impression on the delegates and visitors.

You allege that the National Assembly has sought to avoid responsibility for the May 19 letter of the Universal House of Justice by suggesting that the letter was intended for others. Yet, the letter itself testifies that it was written in direct response to questions raised by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Supreme Body. **As noted in the letter, the National Assembly requested a meeting with the House of Justice to present its concerns**

about the growth and development of the American Bahá'í community. The House of Justice states that the meetings were, "a new fact of history," and that their "...hearts were touched by the candour, courage, and sincerity with which your members presented your concerns, as well as by the spirit of optimism you displayed despite the overwhelming challenges and burdens which prompted your request for a meeting with us."

Their response, the May 19 letter, while applicable in principle to Bahá'ís everywhere, speaks specifically to the challenges facing the National Assembly and the American Bahá'í community. **Moreover, the entire structure of the National Assembly's Annual Report, and of the National Convention itself, was conspicuously altered in response to issues raised in the May 19 letter, as is stated in the opening paragraph of the Annual Report.**

The statements made at the Convention about the difficulties of administering the affairs of the Bahá'í community and that no university for Bahá'í administration exists, cannot be understood out of the context in which they were presented. Likewise, the statements about the intended recipients of the May 19 letter, which you heard "second-hand without attribution," cannot be accepted as a sound indicative of the position of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Since the National Assembly itself posed the questions and issues to the Universal House of Justice addressed in the letter, it would be unreasonable to conclude that the National Assembly would not ponder deeply and take action on the answers that it received. Indeed, the May 19 letter's specific relevance to the circumstances and conditions of the American Bahá'í community is precisely what prompted

> the National Assembly to share it immediately with the friends.

> [–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(9 children)
>
> **You complain that, "for the most part, open and frank consultation did not obtain during the Convention, because the Convention seemed structured to avoid it."** You cite as an example that the consultation on the May 19 letter was "restricted" to the "closed Saturday morning post-balloting session only." The Convention agenda was presented to the delegates and ratified at the first session. Moreover, before the opening of the National Convention, the delegates attended a day-long deepening on consultation, conducted by the Counselors. The goal was the refinement of the delegates' consultative skills, and the fostering of an environment at the National Convention in which delegates would feel completely free to express their hopes, concerns and grievances. The results of this kind of training, conducted for the last several years, were noticeable in the frank inquiries from the delegates and the recommendations and suggestions they offered. That this Convention was no different can be observed on the highlights tape sent to every delegate for his/her post-Convention report. **Moreover, this year, in the light of the May 19 letter, the National Assembly went to great lengths to survey the issues of concern to the delegates before the Convention, to provide question and answer sheets on troubling questions that circulate in the community but might not be raised on the Convention floor, and to open a room in which delegates could review the financial records of the National Assembly with the help of its Controller.**
>
> **No restrictions were placed on the discussion of the May 19 letter. The May 19 letter was the**

sole focus of consultation in the session after the delegates voted for the National Spiritual Assembly. However, frequent reference to its contents was made throughout the Convention. National Assembly members who spoke during the discussion of the May 19 letter, did so in response to questions posed by delegates. Toward the end of that session, the Convention Chairman asked the delegates whether they wished to extend the discussion into the afternoon session. The delegates voted not to do so.

Both the Counselors and the National Spiritual Assembly were deeply moved by the candor of the delegates. Perhaps the restraint that you stated you sensed in some of the delegates can be attributed, as one of the delegates said, to their consciousness of the need to present their views in a manner that reflects the spirit of the House of Justice's December 29, 1988 letter concerning individual rights and freedoms in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The Supreme Body instructs us that, "content, volume, style, tact, wisdom, timeliness are among the critical factors in determining the effects of speech for good or evil. Consequently, the friends need ever to be conscious of the significance of this activity which so distinguishes human beings from other forms of life, and they must exercise it judiciously."

In the same letter, the Universal House of Justice further comments that the principle of judicious use of language also applies to the written word. In this context, we address your suggestion that *The American Bahá'í* become an "objective newspaper" conducting "real journalism," with its own independent board of Bahá'í professional journalists responsible for editorial decision-making. It was never the intention of the National Assembly for the *American Bahá'í* to serve as a "regular" newspaper. **Though it is produced on newsprint as a cost-saving measure,** *The American Bahá'í* **is a periodical for publishing information on the**

policies and priorities of the Universal House of Justice, the Counselors and the National Spiritual Assembly and its agencies. In addition, it publishes news of the activities and opinions of the believers in response to the goals of the community. All articles are edited and reviewed following the publications review policies of the Universal House of Justice.

The National Spiritual Assembly will always require an organ for the dissemination of institutional and community news.

To change *The American Bahá'í* **into an "objective newspaper," not "simply a house organ of the NSA" would not only deprive the National Assembly of a necessary institutional publication, but would also ignore certain cautions of the Supreme Body.** You will recall that in its December 29, 1988 letter, after stating that the Bahá'í community's emergence from obscurity does not mark its attainment of maturity, the House of Justice asked:

Has he [Shoghi Effendi] not advised us all that the subsequent stage of oppression must precede the stages of its emancipation and its recognition as a world religion? ... Those who are anxious to relax all restraint, who invoke freedom of speech as the rationale for publishing every and any thing concerning the Bahá'í community, who call for the immediate termination of the practice of review now that the Faith has emerged from obscurity -- are they not aware of these sobering prospects?

You asked that the National Spiritual Assembly decentralize and restructure "with an increased emphasis on teaching and refocusing finances. Decentralization is a major goal of the National Assembly. You may recall that the plan for reorganization of the national administration and the decentralization of several functions was first published in *The American Bahá'í* in September 1992. Most aspects of that plan have been implemented. However, financial restraints prevented the establishment of the Regional Teaching and Administrative Committees which the National Assembly had envisioned. In its letter of June 21, 1995, the National Spiritual Assembly announced its intention to proceed with the decentralization plans. Assemblies were invited to submit, by August 1, 1995, their suggestions, proposals and comments about how regional committees might best serve the Bahá'í communities, groups and isolated believers in their areas. Feedback from the Assemblies will be analyzed by the National Spiritual Assembly's Decentralization Task Force, discussed with the Continental Counselors and reported to District Conventions for further comments from the friends.

Decentralization, however, will not reduce the National Budget. It will expand the Bahá'í community's capacity better to manage the growth and development of the community as a whole. Throughout its discussions of this subject, the National Assembly has been mindful of Shoghi Effendi's admonition to strive for balance in order to avoid the "evils of overcentralization" and the "perils of utter decentralization with the consequent lapse of governing authority from the hands of the National Representatives of the believers..."

It may interest you that virtually all of the national agencies directly serve key aspects of the teaching and community development functions; this is not solely the work of the National Teaching Committee's Office. Decentralization of some teaching and administrative functions will reduce the heavy burden on the Bahá'í National Center and strengthen greatly the administrative foundation of the national community.

[–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(8 children)

Currently, the agencies of the national administration are understaffed and under funded. Years of Fund deficits and repeated staff reductions have resulted in extreme austerity, with most of the friends at the National Center performing several functions at significant sacrifices to themselves and their families.

You state the "many NSA members serve as full-time paid employees, and some receive substantial perquisites." The reality is that three members of the National Assembly are compensated for their services -- the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary and the Secretary for External Affairs. The National Assembly annually reviews their status and establishes their compensation based on need, just as it does with other employees. There are no perquisites included.

The average level of compensation for staff of the National Assembly is $23,400, quite low considering the cost of living in Greater Chicagoland.

Moreover, despite an annual inflation rate in the Chicago area of 4%, the National Center personnel have only received increases totaling 3% over the last 14 years. A more detailed discussion of these and other questions can be found in the materials distributed at the National Convention.

We are saddened that the subject of compensation of the friends who serve the National Spiritual Assembly, at significant financial and professional sacrifice, has become a point of conjecture and contention among some of the believers.

The primary burden of the National Fund is properties, not staff, or the 3% spent on travel and other expenses. Maintenance and repair of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, the permanent schools and institutes, and the Bahá'í National Center costs millions of dollars each year. These funds are almost never available when needed and, there-

fore, must be borrowed. The accumulation of funds borrowed over time for building repairs accounts for the deficit in the National Fund. What you describe as "extraneous properties" are routinely sold, with the exception of those of negligible value for which buyers are difficult to find.

We hope that this information, and the detailed reports distributed at the National Convention will dispel the concerns held by a few members of the community.

The National Assembly agrees with your suggestion to create an "idea forum" to tap the creative talent of the community. As we stated in the Annual Report, the community regularly contributes volunteer services valued at over $4 million dollars per year. Among those volunteers are Bahá'ís with expert knowledge and experience in a wide range of fields, who are regularly called upon to help evaluate and refine the function of the National Center offices, the Teaching Committee, the Treasury, Fund Development, the schools, the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, the Bahá'í Home, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, property repairs and virtually all other functions.

In addition, social development efforts such as race unity, gender equality, and community development depend on the enthusiastic participation of a large number of believers. To help identify such human resources across the community, the National Assembly is establishing an electronic talent network.

Our Fund Development plans are described in detail in the National Convention materials.

Citing the assessment of the National Spiritual Assembly that too few of the friends are infected with a passion for teaching and, therefore, our progress is slow, you recommend that the National Assembly "stop blaming the Bahá'ís" and "take responsibility." The National Assembly's cares about the progress of the teaching work arise from an analysis of the patterns of teaching and proclamation in the community developed from the reports of the visits around the community by members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the National Teaching Committee, repeated surveys, and regular discussions with the Counselors and the National Teaching Committee.

The purpose of that segment of the Annual Report was to remind the friends that only the followers of Bahá'u'lláh have been given the "duty and privilege" of teaching His Cause and to call their attention to the need to intensify their teaching efforts and increasingly organize their activities around this important work. As for the activities you suggest, these are within the competence of Local Spiritual Assemblies to undertake.

We are in complete agreement with your suggestion to "take the Bahá'í teachings outside." Greater involvement in the life of society is one of the major goals of the Three Year Plan. As stated in the Annual Reports, the National Assembly is pleased with the community's progress on two fronts in this regard. The first is the Faith's leadership role in helping to shape national policy such as the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The second is the national prominence the American Bahá'í community has gained through its leadership in race unity. Bahá'í communities sponsored over 1200 race unity events last year, in conjunction with other organizations, institutions and municipalities.

The pattern of practical application of Bahá'í principles has become one of the brightest aspects of Bahá'í life in the United States. As the pattern continues to grow, the teaching work will accelerate and the influence of Bahá'í thought will become evident.

[–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(7 children)

Likewise, the National Spiritual Assembly agrees that there is the need for activities that would enrich the spiritual life of the believers. The Bahá'í Writings repeatedly stress the importance of the friends' obedience to the laws of God and application of the teachings and principles to their daily lives as the true means to becoming more spiritual. When the friends study deeply and put into practice the Sacred Scriptures their spiritual lives cannot help but be enriched. Also recommended for such study are the compilations entitled, Trustworthiness, Spiritual Foundations: Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude, the Bahá'í Life and The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith.

'Abdu'l-Bahá reminds us that the Nineteen Day Feast provides the means for helping the individual believer and the community attain a more spiritual life. In time, the friends will come to appreciate the significance of the Feast more fully.

As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this Feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endued with a power that is not of this world.

The Master also encouraged the friends to conduct "spiritual meetings" of prayer and music.

As you noted, the study of mysticism represents a fertile field for spiritual growth. In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a Local Spiritual Assembly, the following statement is made about mysticism:

...The Guardian feels ... should study more deeply the teachings, and meditate on what he studies. We liken God to the Sun, which gives us all our life. So the Spirit of God reaches us through the Souls of the manifestations. We must learn to commune with Their Souls, and this is what the Martyrs seemed to have done, and what brought them to such ecstasy of joy that life became nothing. This is the true mysticism, and the secret, inner meaning of life which humanity has at present, drifted so far from.

At the end of your letter you indicate that you are offering your comments with "love, obedience and respect." The National Spiritual Assembly finds it difficult, however, to reconcile this with the words you

> **have chosen to use in your letter and with its overall tone.** You have implied that the National Spiritual Assembly has deliberately misled the friends to serve its own purpose, has acted improperly and has lost the trust of the American Bahá'í community. To allege that the National Assembly would employ the political device of "spin doctoring" information that it presents to the believers is unconscionable and contrary to the spirit and form of Bahá'í Administration. Turning again to the National Assembly's Annual Report, you will note that it follows the guidance of the Universal House of Justice in the May 19 letter:
>
> Do as Shoghi Effendi advised you: 'Banishing every vestige of secrecy, of undue reticence, of dictatorial aloofness, from their midst, they [the National Spiritual Assembly] should radiantly and abundantly unfold to the eyes of the delegates, by whom they are elected, their plans, their hopes, and their cares. They should familiarize the delegates with the various matters that will have to be considered in the current year, and calmly and conscientiously study and weigh the opinions and judgement of the delegates.'
>
> **The aspersions that were cast on the integrity of the National Spiritual Assembly and its members by a slanderous mailing that had been distributed throughout the community, created an atmosphere of distrust that even made a few believers withhold contributions from the National Fund.** To dispel their doubts, the National assembly made available to the delegates its financial records and made an effort to answer any questions that the delegates may have had while setting before them the "plans, hopes and cares" of the National Assembly for the final year of the Three Year Plan.
>
> In the conclusion of the May 19 letter, the Universal House of Justice offers the National Spiritual Assembly and the American Bahá'í community assurance and encouragement that we can meet the increasingly difficult challenges we face with "undiminished hope and confidence."

> The divine promises to your community are certain; the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh are assured as you strive to fulfill His purpose. The wings of the beloved Master remain spread over you that you may succeed in discharging the tasks He has especially entrusted to your care. And our love ever surrounds you and your cherished community, growing stronger at every moment. Step forward then to meet the requirements of the hour with undiminished hope and confidence.
>
> The National Spiritual Assembly appreciates the seriousness of your issues and hopes that its remarks will allay your concerns.
>
> You are in our prayers and in our hearts.
>
> National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
>
> (signed) Robert C. Henderson

> [–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(6 children)
>
> The Universal House of Justice
>
> 19 May 1994
>
> The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
>
> Dear Bahá'í Friends,
>
> We recall with much joy and deep gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh your presence in the Holy Land only a short while ago during the month of the Fast. Your urgent request to which we acceded by **meeting with all nine of your members in intensive consultations over a period of three days—a new fact of history in itself—initiated another phase in the evolution of your Assembly** and reinforced the bonds that bind the American Bahá'í community to the World Center of the Faith. **Our hearts were touched by the candor, courage, and sincerity with which your members presented your concerns,** as well as by the spirit of optimism you displayed despite the overwhelming challenges and burdens which prompted your request for a meeting with us.

Having considered the various points and queries you raised, we are now able to respond to those which fall under the broad categories of teaching, relations between your National Spiritual Assembly and the Continental Counselors, and the functioning of your Assembly.

Regarding your "Vision in Action" initiative, you reported evidences of a tremendous response, some movement, and some expansion; furthermore, the stimulus of the recent Atlanta conference spearheaded by the Continental Counselors caused a marked acceleration of activities. In sum, the friends have seldom been more visibly active, but growth is slow; you feel the community has for some time been on the threshold of a breakthrough which remains elusive. The degeneration of society, as manifested by the breakdown of moral standards and the alarming increase of violence, you feel, is exerting a debilitating effect on the individual believer. You yearn for a way to free the teaching potential which to a large extent is locked up in the individual in the face of these dreadful circumstances.

We feel that an overanxiousness on your part about a breakthrough and an undue worry over the state of society can be counterproductive. While there are opportunities for greater growth than is occuring, **neither your Assembly nor the friends must burden themselves with feelings of failure at every disappointment,** for such feelings are self-fulfilling and can easily cause stagnation in the expansion of the Cause. The tendency towards frustration, sometimes induced by a desire for instant gratification, must be resisted by an effort to gain deeper appreciation of the divine process. In exhorting the individual concerning the spiritual obligation resting upon him "to make of the mandate of teaching, so vitally binding upon all, the all-pervading concern of his life," Shoghi Effendi said that "every bearer of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh should consider it not only an obligation but a privilege to scatter far and wide the seeds of His Faith, and to rest content in the abiding knowledge that whatever be the immediate response to that Message, and however inadequate the vehicle that conveyed it, the power of its Author will, as He sees fit, enable those seeds to germinate, and in circumstances which no one can foresee enrich the harvest which the labor of His followers

> will gather." **You may rest assured that your particularly blessed community will not be denied a triumphant expansion if its members remain constant and confident in their teaching activities.**
>
> Paradoxical as it may seem, the prospects towards the breakthrough you anticipate in the teaching field are conspicuous in the current, distressing state of society. You must realize that the worse conditions become, the more plentiful are the opportunities to teach the Cause, the greater the degree of receptivity to the Divine Message. Bahá'u'lláh certainly gave ample foreknowledge about the radical, worldwide disturbance which His Revelation is creating as a part of the transition towards the unity and peace that are the ultimate goal of His Faith. Your awareness of this inevitable transition should **enable your members to detach themselves from the debilitating emotions** aroused by the turmoil which characterizes this process and to equip your Assembly as the highest governing body of the Bahá'í community in the United States **to demonstrate to the friends a confident outlook, which the persistence and vigor of their teaching activities will fully justify.**
>
> Such detachment as exemplified by your Assembly and practiced by the friends throughout the community will, moreover, signify a spiritual achievement which was anticipated by Shoghi Effendi in his warning to your community, when he said: "The glowing tributes, so repeatedly and deservedly paid to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers, both individually and as an organic community, must, under no circumstances, be confounded with the characteristics and nature of the people from which God has raised them up." In other words, by the attainment of a "sharp distinction between that community and that people," you and the friends who rely upon your guidance will recognize that American society cannot be exempted from the rigors and consequences of the transition affecting all the world.
>
> Painful as may be the decadent scene, deep as is your sympathy for those who suffer from the terrible decline of society, you must see the possibilities which are thus provided for augmenting the healing forces of an emerging World Or-

der. Shoghi Effendi advised the North American community plainly in this regard. "The opportunities which the turmoil of the present age presents, with all the sorrows which it evokes, the fears which it excites, the disillusionment which it produces, the perplexities which it creates, the indignation which it arouses, the revolt which it provokes, the grievances it engenders, the spirit of restless search which it awakens, must," he asserted, "be exploited for the purpose of spreading far and wide the knowledge of the redemptive power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and for enlisting fresh recruits in the ever-swelling army of His followers."

Commenting further on **the global spectacle of upheavals, cataclysms and tribulations which the worsening affairs of humanity evoke at the impending approach of the Kingdom of God on earth,** Shoghi Effendi addressed these words of insight and encouragement to the North American friends: "Far from yielding in their resolve, far from growing oblivious of their task, they should, at no time, however much buffeted by circumstances, forget that the synchronization of such world-shaking crises with the progressive unfoldment and fruition of their divinely appointed task is itself the work of Providence, the design of an inscrutable Wisdom, and the purpose of an all-compelling Will, a Will that directs and controls, in its own mysterious way, both the fortunes of the Faith and the destinies of men. Such simultaneous processes of rise and of fall, of integration and of disintegration, of order and chaos, with their continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other, are but aspects of a greater Plan, one and indivisible, whose Source is God, whose author is Bahá'u'lláh, the theatre of whose operations is the entire planet, and whose ultimate objectives are the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind."

Moreover, the beloved Guardian felt that: "Reflections such as these should steel the resolve of the entire Bahá'í community, should dissipate their forebodings, and arouse them to rededicate themselves to every single provision of that Divine Charter whose outline has been delineated for them by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá." By being attuned to this divine perspective, your Assembly will be able to assist the friends to see that they will not merely be able to cope with **the alarming incidents of social decline they are daily**

> **witnessing,** but even better than that, they will be inspired to arise with renewed vision to recruit to Bahá'í membership an increasing number of men and women whose minds and hearts are ready to respond to the Divine Message and who will join them in dispelling the bewilderment and despair gripping their fellow citizens and undermining the structure of their country.

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It is also vital for your Assembly to keep in mind that **the mental anguish which the prevailing situation induces can and must be overcome through prayer and a conscious attention to teaching the Cause and living the Bahá'í life with a world-embracing vision.** Certainly, the members of such a well established community as yours, one enjoying the special favors providentially conferred upon it by the Tablets of the Divine Plan, do realize the urgency and seriousness of their task. Surely they see with what patient endurance the dear friends in the Cradle of the Faith are meeting their God-given challenges even to the extent of sacrificing their life's blood so that the world may become a better place. Undoubtedly, the highly esteemed American believers, who bear the designation "spiritual descendants of the Dawn-breakers," know quite well that they must now seize their chance at this critical time to prove their own capacity to endure that living sacrifice which, as Shoghi Effendi said, in contrast to dying, is required of them if they are to fulfill the glorious destiny forecast for them in the scriptures of our Faith. May they be granted the celestial strength to pass, over and over again, the mental tests which 'Abdu'l-Bahá promised He would send to them to purify them, thus enabling them to achieve their divinely conferred potential as a force for change in the world.

In the arena of teaching, your indispensable terms of reference and the unerring resource to which you have ready access are the Master's Tablets of the Divine Plan. They invest your community with extraordinary powers shared by your sister community in Canada. It is in reacquainting the American friends with the special mission, both at home and abroad, assigned to them in these seminal and timeless documents, and in relating their contents to current conditions, that you will find the key to the revitalization of the teaching work and the winning of outstanding victories on the home front. In this effort you will be powerfully aided by the explanations provided in the letters of our dear Guardian, such as *The Advent of Divine Justice*, "The Challenging Requirements of the Present Hour," "American Bahá'ís in the Time of World Peril." We have every confidence that, together with the Continental Counselors and the Auxiliary Board members, you can discover the way further to release the enormous energies of the friends and to intensify the zeal which they have so splendidly displayed in the teaching field on so many occasions in the past.

We were very pleased by the sense you conveyed of an ever-closer relationship between your Assembly and the Continental Counselors, and we were even more deeply impressed by your eagerness to know how you might strengthen this relationship. A beginning towards achieving your desire would be for you to obtain an integrated understanding of the Counselors' responsibilities and sphere of action in relation to your own.

As you know, a distinguishing feature of the Administrative Order is the existence of elected institutions, on the one hand, which function corporately with vested legislative, executive and judicial powers, and of appointed, eminent and devoted believers, on the other hand, who function primarily as individuals for the specific purposes of protecting and propagating the Faith under the guidance of the Head of the Faith. The two sets of institutions collaborate in their functions so as to ensure the progress of the Cause. You are undoubtedly aware of the previous exposition of this subject; however, we offer the following comments to assist your further understanding of the matter.

The Continental Boards of Counselors and the National Spiritual Assemblies share in the functions of propagation and protection, but the Counselors specialize in these functions from a different level and in a different manner. From a continental vantage point, the Counselors bring a perspective to their functions which, when offered to a National Assembly in the form of counsel, advice, recommendations, suggestions or commentary, enriches the latter's understanding, acquaints it with a broader experience than its own, and encourages it to maintain a world-embracing vision.

An aspect of the difference in the manner of functioning of the Counselors derives from the instructions given in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the Hands of the Cause of God, the extension into the future of whose functions of protection and propagation is the responsibility of the Counselors. As appointees of the Universal House of Justice, the Counselors assist the Head of the Faith to broaden the base, foster the strength and ensure the security of the National Spiritual Assemblies and the institutions and communities under their jurisdiction. Through their Auxiliary Boards, the Continental Counselors spread the benefits of their functions to the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the grassroots of the community. These functions are shaped by their obligations, in the words of the Will and Testament, "to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things." It can be seen, then, that through their work in propagating and protecting the Faith, the Counselors play a major role in knitting and bolstering the entire fabric of the Bahá’í community.

The flexibility and speed with which the Counselors and their Auxiliary Board members can respond to a perceived need in the community—such as a need for encouragement, explanation of plans, deepening in the Teachings, protection of the Covenant—are elements of their functioning which distinguish them from Spiritual Assemblies; this flexibility enables them to operate as occasions demand, whether it is in giving counsel at a meeting, or advising an individual in private, or helping the friends to understand and obey a ruling of the Spiritual Assembly, or dealing with issues of the Covenant. In such different modes these officers of the Faith are able to draw attention to relevant Texts, to impart information, explore situations, and acquaint themselves with conditions in ways not possible to a Spiritual Assembly but important to the success of its plans. They are able then to share with Spiritual Assemblies, as deemed necessary, ideas, analyses, perceptions and advice which inevitably enhance the ability of these Assemblies to serve their communities. **They thus assist Assemblies to mature. Where Local Assemblies are new or weak, Auxiliary Board members help them to understand their functions, encourage them to organize their work, and rally the local believers in support of their Assemblies' initiatives.

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Through the various modes of their activities, the Counselors aided by their Auxiliary Boards spark and buttress the growth and development of Spiritual Assemblies and local and national communities.** With this perspective, Shoghi Effendi's regarding of the Auxiliary Board members as "a prop and mainstay to the often overworked and overburdened National Spiritual Assemblies" becomes clear. The indispensability of the involvement of Continental Counselors and Auxiliary Board members in the planning stages of the teaching work and the benefits of acquainting them with the hopes and concerns of National Spiritual Assemblies and of seeking their advice are also obvious.

With the opening of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age, a procedure was activated by which the goals of national plans are formulated in joint consultations of National Spiritual Assemblies and Continental Counselors. It initiated a new phase in the maturation of the Administrative Order. This development ensures two significant benefits in particular: It enables each institution to draw on the experiences and insights particular to the other, thereby making available to the planning process two distinct channels of information from two levels of Bahá'í administration; and it also assures to the Counselors a necessary familiarity with the background, rationale, and content of national plans, which as a matter of principle they are expected to support. Both institutions obtain strength from such collaboration, and we are particularly pleased that the designing of the Three Year Plan in the United States followed a pattern which involved the two arms of the administration in the manner you described to us.

While the Counselors and their Auxiliary Boards, in addition to the discharge of their specific responsibilities, will support the initiatives adopted by a National Spiritual Assembly, the Assembly should recognize that the Counselors must be free to determine, according to their own best judgment, in what manner that support will be given. There is a great difference between the functions of national committees and Auxiliary Board members in this respect. **Whereas**

the committees may be required by the Assembly to follow particular procedures, Auxiliary Board members are not similarly bound; yet they should not act in a manner that undermines the operations of the National Assembly or its agencies. This does not mean that Auxiliary Board members may not decide, upon request or not, to participate in the execution of a particular program or educational project devised by a national committee, or even to contribute towards the conceptualization and fruition of the project. It does mean, however, that **their prerogative to proceed within a wider latitude than that accessible to the national committee should be respected.**

By working at the grassroots of the community, an Auxiliary Board member is often able to satisfy a need not being met by any national or local program, but which if dealt with by the Auxiliary Board member will better equip the local friends to achieve the established goals of the community. Such a flexibility on the part of the Auxiliary Board member in dealing with immediate situations, **such a freedom for independent action, should be taken for granted by all concerned.** However, a pattern of activity on the part of the Auxiliary Board member, or even of a Counselor, which appears to the National Assembly to be seriously diverting attention from the adopted plans of the community should unhesitatingly be made a matter for remedial consultation with the Counselor.

The Counselors are members of a continental, as distinct from a national, institution, and they occupy a rank higher than that of the National Spiritual Assembly. Apart from any other consideration, their rank is, in a practical sense, **a functional necessity** if these officers of the Faith are to be accorded freedom of the community at all levels and their advice and other functions are to be taken seriously. We have said in an earlier letter that "the existence of institutions of such exalted rank, comprising individuals who play such a vital role, who yet have no legislative, administrative or judicial authority, and are entirely devoid of priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations, is a feature of Bahá’í administration unparalleled in the religions of the past." **It is a difficult concept to grasp. But with the passage of time since the first contingent of Continental Counselors was appointed, much understanding has surely been acquired.**

Shoghi Effendi stated categorically to your Assembly: **"There can be no conflict of authority, no duality under any form or cir-**

cumstances in any sphere of Bahá’í jurisdiction whether local, national or international." The authority of a National Assembly is therefore not diminished but, rather, enhanced by the existence of the Continental Counselors, who are duty bound by the very character of their responsibilities as protectors of the Faith to uphold the rank and to support the authority of Spiritual Assemblies. Similarly, the National Assembly must, on the basis of principle and in its own best interest, ensure that Counselors and Auxiliary Board members are not hampered in carrying out their sacred responsibilities and that their right and freedom to function are upheld.

The attitude of these two institutions towards each other should be motivated not merely by a legalistic application of the rules of their functional relationship. Far more is required, for they must, in the first place, approach their joint responsibilities within the framework of the spiritual requisites for all successful Bahá’í relationships. Where love, respect and courtesy are genuinely and mutually expressed, estrangement finds no accommodation and problems become soluble challenges. Bahá’u’lláh’s admonition is highly instructive in this regard; He says: "Abase not the station of the learned in Bahá and belittle not the rank of such rulers as administer justice amidst you."

Achieving a closer and more effective relationship between you and the Continental Counselors will depend on the cultivation of an incrementally harmonious attitude and on an openness in your dealings with them which this attitude will certainly facilitate. The relationship between you should be one of fellowship informed with a sense of respect but devoid of the rigid formalities associated with so many social organizations. When you have doubts and concerns about your own plans, confide in the Counselors; when something they do causes you worry, talk to them in the proper spirit of Bahá’í consultation. Remember that they, like yourselves, are burdened with the work of the Cause and are beset with many concerns in its service, and they need your sympathetic understanding of the challenges they face. Open your hearts and your minds to them; regard them as your confidants, your loving friends. And be ever ready to extend to them your hand in support.

The existence of a loving, trusting and informal atmosphere in your dealings with the Counselors **should not, however, be allowed to relax adherence to the rules governing the working relation-**

ship between the Continental Board of Counselors and their Auxiliary Boards, on the one hand, and the National Spiritual Assembly and its committees, on the other. These matters are explained in detail in our letter of 1 October 1969, which you have published.

We now wish to address the manner of your functioning as a National Spiritual Assembly. Your analysis of the situation identified **the issues of immediate concern about the national administration of the Faith, such issues as: overcentralization,** particularly with regard to the administration of the teaching work; your fear that you may be exercising a level of administrative control that may be stifling individual initiative throughout the country; and the relation of your Assembly to the community.

You live in a society caught in the tightening grip of moral decadence on a vast scale. But this should come as no surprise to you. It is the unavoidable consequence of a pervasive godlessness; its symptoms and repercussions were described in painful detail by Shoghi Effendi in several of his letters to the Western friends. Inevitably, the American Bahá’í community is affected by this condition to some extent. **The corrosive influence of an overbearing and rampant secularization is infecting the style of administration of the Faith in your community and threatening to undermine its efficacy.**

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The aggressiveness and competitiveness which animate a dominantly capitalist culture; **the partisanship inherent in a fervidly democratic system; the suspicion of public-policy institutions and the skepticism towards established authority ingrained in the political attitude of the people and which trace their origins to the genesis of American society; the cynical disregard of the moderating principles and rules of civilized human relationships resulting from an excessive liberalism and its immoral consequences—such unsavory characteristics inform entrenched habits of American life, which imperceptibly at first but more obviously in the long run have come to exert too great a sway over the manner of management of the Bahá’í community** and over the behavior of portions of its rank and file in relation to the

Cause. **This unwholesome influence must be arrested by immediate, deliberate effort**—an effort which must surely begin within your Assembly itself. Further accommodation of it will severely impede the progress of your community, despite the abundant possibilities of an imminent breakthrough. It was due to this concern in particular that we anxiously welcomed your request for a meeting with us.

The guarantee of well-being and success in all your endeavors to serve the Cause of God can be stated in one word: unity. It is the alpha and omega of all Bahá'í objectives. Among the first admonitions addressed to National Spiritual Assemblies by Shoghi Effendi was the following assertion: "It is, I firmly believe, of the utmost urgent importance that, with unity of purpose and action firmly established in our midst, and with every trace of animosity and mistrust of the past banished from our hearts, we should form one united front, and combat, wisely and tactfully, every force that might darken the spirit of the Movement, cause division in its ranks, and narrow it by dogmatic and sectarian belief." He then stated that "it is primarily upon the elected members of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world that this highly important duty devolves," warning that, "should such a representative and responsible body fail to realize this fundamental requisite for all successful achievement, the whole structure is sure to crumble."

Unity within the Assembly itself is, of course, of immediate importance to the wider unity your actions are intended to foster and sustain. At no time can any member of your Assembly afford to be unmindful of this basic requirement nor neglect to work towards upholding it. Of particular relevance is the attitude that the members adopt towards their membership on that exalted body. There needs to be a recognition on their part of the Assembly's spiritual character and a feeling in their hearts of respect for the institution based upon a perception of it as something beyond or apart from themselves, as a sacred entity whose powers they have the privilege to engage and canalize by coming together in harmony and acting in accordance with divinely revealed principles. With such a perspective the members will be able better to acquire an appropriate posture in relation to the Assembly itself, to appreciate their role as Trustees of the Merciful and **to counteract any impression that they have assumed ownership and control of the institution in the manner of major stockholders of a business enterprise.**

Also relevant to effecting unity is the attitude of the friends, whether serving on any Assembly or not, towards the exercise of authority in the Bahá’í community. People generally tend to be suspicious of those in authority. The reason is not difficult to understand, since human history is replete with examples of the disastrous misuse of authority and power. A reversal of this tendency is not easily achievable, but the Bahá’í friends must be freed of suspicion towards their institutions if the wheels of progress are to turn with uninterrupted speed. A rigorous discipline of thought and action on the part of both the friends and the National Assembly will succeed in meeting this challenge; both must live up to their responsibilities in this regard by recognizing some fundamental realities.

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The oneness of humanity, which is the primary principle and ultimate goal of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, implies, as Shoghi Effendi said, an "organic change in the structure of present-day society." So fundamental a change in the structural conception of society must also imply a new pattern for the administration of community affairs in a Bahá’í context. The insights offered by the beloved Guardian, as conveyed by his secretary in a letter dated 14 October 1941, shed light on this critical subject:

The friends must never mistake the Bahá’í administration for an end in itself. It is merely the instrument of the spirit of the Faith. This Cause is a Cause which God has revealed to humanity as a whole. It is designed to benefit the entire human race, and the only way it can do this is to reform the community life of mankind, as well as seeking to regenerate the individual. *_The Bahá’í Administration is only the first shaping of what in future will come to be the social life and laws of community living._ *

Shoghi Effendi’s advice to an individual in another instance provides a further perspective: "He urges you to do all you can to promote unity and love amongst the members of the Community there, as this seems to be their greatest need. So often young communities, in their desire to administer the Cause, lose sight of the fact that these spiritual relationships are far more important and fundamental than the rules and regulations which must govern the conduct of community affairs."

It can therefore be deduced that the importance of the Bahá’í administration is its value in serving as a facilitator of the emergence and maintenance of community life in a wholly new mode, and in catering to the requirements of the spiritual relationships which flow from love and unity among the friends. This touches upon a distinguishing characteristic of Bahá'í life which such spiritual relationships foster, namely, the spirit of servitude to God, expressed in service to the Cause, to the friends and to humanity as a whole. The attitude of the individual as a servant, an attitude preeminently exemplified in the life and person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is a dynamic that permeates the activities of the Faith; it acquires collective, transformative force in the normal functioning of a community. In this regard, the institutions of the Faith stand as channels for the promotion of this salient characteristic. **It is in this framework that the concepts of rulership and leadership, authority and power are properly understood and actualized.**

The appearance of a united, firmly based and self-sustaining community must be a major goal of a Spiritual Assembly. Composed of a membership reflecting a diversity of personalities, talents, abilities and interests, such a community requires a level of internal interaction between the Assembly and the body of the believers based on a commonly recognized commitment to service, and in which a sense of partnership based on appreciation of each other's distinctive sphere of action is fully recognized and unfailingly upheld, and no semblance of a dichotomy between the two appears. In such a community leadership is that expression of service by which the Spiritual Assembly invites and encourages the use of the manifold talents and abilities with which the community is endowed, and stimulates and guides the diverse elements of the community towards goals and strategies by which the effects of a coherent force for progress can be realized.

The maintenance of a climate of love and unity depends largely upon the feeling among the individuals composing the community that the Assembly is a part of themselves, that their cooperative interactions with that divinely ordained body allow them a fair latitude for initiative and that the quality of their relationships with both the institution and their fellow believers encourages a spirit of enterprise invigorated by an awareness of the revolutionizing purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, by a consciousness of the high privilege of their being associated with efforts to realize that purpose, and by a consequent, ever-present sense of joy. In such a climate, the community is transformed from being the mere sum of its parts to assuming a wholly new personality as an entity in which its members blend without losing their individual uniqueness. The possibilities for manifesting such a transformation exist most immediately at the local level, but it is a major responsibility of the National Assembly to nurture the conditions in which they may flourish.

The authority to direct the affairs of the Faith locally, nationally and internationally, is divinely conferred on elected institutions. However, the power to accomplish the tasks of the community resides primarily in the mass of the believers. **The authority of the institutions is an irrevocable necessity for the progress of humanity; its exercise is an art to be mastered.** The power of action in the believers is unlocked at the level of individual initiative and surges at the level of collective volition. In its potential, this mass power, this mix of individual potentialities, exists in a malleable form susceptible to the multiple reactions of individuals to the sundry influences at work in the world. To realize its highest purpose, this power needs to express itself through orderly avenues of activity. **Even though individuals may strive to be guided in their actions by their personal understanding of the Divine Texts, and much can be accomplished thereby, such actions, untempered by the overall direction provided by authorized institutions, are incapable of attaining the thrust necessary for the unencumbered advancement of civilization.**

Individual initiative is a preeminent aspect of this power; it is therefore a major responsibility of the institutions to safeguard and stimulate it. Similarly, it is important for individuals to recognize and accept that the institutions must act as a guiding and moderating influence on the march of civilization. In this sense, the divine requirement that individuals obey the decisions of their Assemblies can clearly be seen as being indispensable to the progress of society. Indeed, individuals must not be abandoned entirely to their own devices with respect to the welfare of society as a whole, neither should they be stifled by the assumption of a dictatorial posture by members of the institutions.

The successful exercise of authority in the Bahá'í community implies the recognition of separate but mutually reinforcing rights and responsibilities between the institutions and the friends in general, a recognition that in turn welcomes the need for cooperation between these two interactive forces of society. As was stated in advice given by Shoghi Effendi: "The individuals and assemblies must learn to cooperate, and to cooperate intelligently, if they desire to adequately discharge their duties and obligations towards the Faith. And no such cooperation is possible without mutual confidence and trust."

Direction comes from Assembly decisions, but its effectiveness depends not only on the clarity with which it is given but also on a number of spiritual and moral factors which must be blended in the general attitude of the individual believers, on the one hand, and the manner and style of

> the functioning of the Assembly, on the other. The following advice of Shoghi Effendi, addressed in an early letter to the Western friends, deals with these two aspects:

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> Let us also bear in mind that the keynote to the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand and fellowship, candor and courage on the other.
>
> The duties of those whom the friends have freely and conscientiously elected as their representatives are no less vital and binding than the obligations of those who have chosen them. Their function is not to dictate, but to consult, and consult not only among themselves, but as much as possible with the friends whom they represent. They must regard themselves in no other light but that of chosen instruments for a more efficient and dignified presentation of the Cause of God. They should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should approach their task with extreme humility, and endeavor by their open-mindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candor, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they should serve, but also their esteem and real affection.
>
> These instructions of the beloved Guardian get to the very heart of what must be more deeply internalized by the members of your Assembly at this time. We repeat for emphasis the terms "extreme humility," "open-mindedness," "candor," "modesty"; and we underscore the openness which is implicit in candor, because the cooperation which must be fostered between your Assembly and the friends will depend significantly on the degree to which, with wise discretion, you share your concerns with the community. Your greatest opportunity for this is the annual National Convention, when the representatives of the entire community come together to consult with you. It is not sufficient that you give only good news and encouraging statistics to the delegates. Do as Shoghi Effendi advised you: "Banishing every vestige of secrecy, of undue reticence, of dictatorial aloofness, from their midst, they

should radiantly and abundantly unfold to the eyes of the delegates, by whom they are elected, their plans, their hopes, and their cares. They should familiarize the delegates with the various matters that will have to be considered in the current year, and calmly and conscientiously study and weigh the opinions and judgments of the delegates."

Even if the delegates find themselves unable to offer useful recommendations toward the resolution of particular issues, by your bringing them into your confidence, they will develop an appreciation, as would be impossible otherwise, of the serious matters confronting the Cause. With this understanding, they will be equipped to assist the community to respond effectively to your decisions, no matter how challenging these may turn out to be. Moreover, it will relieve you of any overwhelming sense of burden to know that such a responsible body of believers shares your innermost concerns; and even more than that, the effect of your openness will be to strengthen the delegates' support of your authority, which it is their sacred duty to give. Besides, as it is neither possible nor practicable for your Assembly to meet with all the believers, nor for the members to be constantly traveling throughout the community, the friends' feeling that you are remote can be ameliorated, though not entirely removed, by the effectiveness of your interactions with the delegates.

In your openness and candor you will, no doubt, avoid ineptitudes that pass as norms in the freedom of speech practiced in your nation. In a society where "telling it like it is" employs a style of expression which robs language of its decorum, and in a time when stridency is commonly presumed to be a quality of leadership, candor is crass, and authority speaks in a loud and vulgar voice. People are frequently obliged to receive direction from their leaders in such disrespectful modes; this is a reason for resentment and suspicion towards those in authority. By contrast, Bahá'í institutions have the task of accustoming the friends to recognizing the expression of authority in language at a moderate pitch.

It would be impossible to overestimate the obligation resting upon you to refine your dealings with the community in the ways already described. You cannot at any time afford to forget that the manner of the use of authority is critical to the success of your work. With this in mind, you must also attend seriously to the behavior of those, more particularly your officers, who must of necessity act on your behalf in carrying out your decisions and conveying your instructions to others. **Further, it is sometimes the case that staff members at your National Center, in their eagerness to be exactly and completely obedient, carry out the instruction of your Assembly with a sharpness of manner and tone that hurts people and provokes resent-**

ment against the very body the staff are striving to serve with loyalty and devotion. The staff should be sensitized to the situation and made to realize, through your loving and persistent guidance, that the spiritual requisites for good and respectful relations with others must be conscientiously applied in their interactions with the friends because to do so is not only virtuous in itself but will also minimize the incidence of bad feeling towards your Assembly.

The temperament of authority in the administration of justice varies according to the degree of the gravity of each case. **Some cases require that the Assembly take action that is firm or drastic. Even so, Assembly members have always to be mindful that the authority they wield must in general be expressed with love, humility and a genuine respect for others. Thus exercised, authority strikes a natural note and accords with that which is acceptable to spiritually attuned and fair-minded souls.** The following guidance of Shoghi Effendi, as conveyed by his secretary, is especially relevant: "The administrators of the Faith of God must be like unto shepherds. Their aim should be to dispel all the doubts, misunderstandings and harmful differences which may arise in the community of the believers. And this they can adequately achieve provided they are motivated by a true sense of love for their fellow-brethren coupled with firm determination to act with justice in all cases which are submitted to them for their consideration."

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 1994, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF THE US REGARDING THE FUNCTIONING OF BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION INSTITUTIONS, STATING "THE COUNSELORS ARE MEMBERS OF A CONTINENTAL, AS DISTINCT FROM A NATIONAL, INSTITUTION, AND THEY OCCUPY A RANK HIGHER THAN THAT OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY"

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May 19. On this date in 1994, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States regarding the functioning of Bahá'í Administration institutions, stating "The Counselors are members of a continental, as distinct from a national, institution, and they occupy a rank higher than that of the National Spiritual Assembly"

The Universal House of Justice

19 May 1994

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We recall with much joy and deep gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh your presence in the Holy Land only a short while ago during the month of the Fast. Your urgent request to which we acceded by **meeting with all nine of your members in intensive consultations over a period of three days—a new fact of history in itself—initiated another phase in the evolution of your Assembly** and reinforced the bonds that bind the American Bahá'í community to the World Center of the Faith. **Our hearts were touched by the candor, courage, and sincerity with which your members presented your concerns,** as well as by the spirit of optimism you displayed despite the overwhelming challenges and burdens which prompted your request for a meeting with us.

Having considered the various points and queries you raised, we are now able to respond to those which fall under the broad categories of teaching, relations between your National Spiritual Assembly and the Continental Counselors, and the functioning of your Assembly.

Regarding your "Vision in Action" initiative, you reported evidences of a tremendous response, some movement, and some expansion; furthermore, the stimulus of the recent Atlanta conference spearheaded by the Continental Counselors caused a marked acceleration of activities. In sum, the friends have seldom been more visibly active, but growth is slow; you feel the community has for some time been on the threshold of a breakthrough which remains elusive. The degeneration of society, as manifested by the breakdown of moral standards and the alarming increase of violence, you feel, is exerting a debilitating effect on the individual believer. You yearn for a way to free the teaching potential which to a large extent is locked up in the individual in the face of these dreadful circumstances.

We feel that an overanxiousness on your part about a breakthrough and an undue worry over the state of society can be counterproductive. While there are opportunities for greater growth than is occurring, **neither your Assembly nor the friends must burden themselves with feelings of failure at every disappointment,** for such feelings are self-fulfilling and can easily cause stagnation in the expansion of the Cause. The tendency towards frustration, sometimes induced by a desire for instant gratification, must be resisted by an effort to gain deeper appreciation of the divine process. In exhorting the individual concerning the spiritual obligation resting upon him "to make of the mandate of teaching, so vitally binding upon all, the all-pervading concern of his life," Shoghi Effendi said that "every bearer of the Message of Bahá’u’lláh should consider it not only an obligation but a privilege to scatter far and wide the seeds of His Faith, and to rest content in the abiding knowledge that whatever be the immediate response to that Message, and however inadequate the vehicle that conveyed it, the power of its Author will, as He sees fit, enable those seeds to germinate, and in circumstances which no one can foresee enrich the harvest which the labor of His followers will gather." **You may rest assured that your particularly blessed community will not be denied a triumphant expansion if its members remain constant and confident in their teaching activities.**

Paradoxical as it may seem, the prospects towards the breakthrough you anticipate in the teaching field are conspicuous in the current, distressing state of society. You must realize that the worse conditions become, the more plentiful are the opportunities to teach the Cause, the greater the degree of receptivity to the Divine Message. Bahá’u’lláh certainly gave ample foreknowledge about the radical, worldwide disturbance which His Revelation is creating as a part of the transition towards the unity and peace that are the ultimate goal of His Faith. Your awareness of this inevitable transition should **enable your members to detach themselves from the debilitating emotions** aroused by the turmoil which characterizes this process and to equip your Assembly as the highest governing body of the Bahá’í community in the United States **to demonstrate to the friends a confident**

outlook, which the persistence and vigor of their teaching activities will fully justify.

Such detachment as exemplified by your Assembly and practiced by the friends throughout the community will, moreover, signify a spiritual achievement which was anticipated by Shoghi Effendi in his warning to your community, when he said: "The glowing tributes, so repeatedly and deservedly paid to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers, both individually and as an organic community, must, under no circumstances, be confounded with the characteristics and nature of the people from which God has raised them up." In other words, by the attainment of a "sharp distinction between that community and that people," you and the friends who rely upon your guidance will recognize that American society cannot be exempted from the rigors and consequences of the transition affecting all the world.

Painful as may be the decadent scene, deep as is your sympathy for those who suffer from the terrible decline of society, you must see the possibilities which are thus provided for augmenting the healing forces of an emerging World Order. Shoghi Effendi advised the North American community plainly in this regard. "The opportunities which the turmoil of the present age presents, with all the sorrows which it evokes, the fears which it excites, the disillusionment which it produces, the perplexities which it creates, the indignation which it arouses, the revolt which it provokes, the grievances it engenders, the spirit of restless search which it awakens, must," he asserted, "be exploited for the purpose of spreading far and wide the knowledge of the redemptive power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and for enlisting fresh recruits in the ever-swelling army of His followers."

Commenting further on **the global spectacle of upheavals, cataclysms and tribulations which the worsening affairs of humanity evoke at the impending approach of the Kingdom of God on earth,** Shoghi Effendi addressed these words of insight and encouragement to the North American friends: "Far from yielding in their resolve, far from growing oblivious of their task, they should, at no time, however much buffeted by circumstances, forget that the synchronization of such world-shaking crises with the progressive unfoldment and fruition of their divinely appointed task is itself the work of Providence, the design of an inscrutable Wisdom, and the purpose of an all-compelling Will, a Will that directs and controls, in its own mysterious way, both the fortunes of the Faith and the destinies of men. Such simultaneous processes of rise and of fall, of integration and of disintegration, of order and chaos, with their continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other, are but aspects of a greater Plan, one and indivisible, whose Source is God, whose author is Bahá'u'lláh, the theatre of whose operations is the entire planet, and whose ultimate objectives are the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind."

Moreover, the beloved Guardian felt that: "Reflections such as these should steel the resolve of the entire Bahá'í community, should dissipate their forebodings, and arouse them to rededicate themselves to every single provision of that Divine Charter whose outline has been delineated for them by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá." By being attuned to this divine perspective, your Assembly will be able to assist the friends to see that they will not merely be able to cope with **the alarming incidents of social decline they are daily witnessing,** but even better than that, they will be inspired to arise with renewed vision to recruit to Bahá'í membership an increasing number of men and women whose minds and hearts are ready to respond to the Divine Message and who will join them in dispelling the bewilderment and despair gripping their fellow citizens and undermining the structure of their country.

It is also vital for your Assembly to keep in mind that **the mental anguish which the prevailing situation induces can and must be overcome through prayer and a conscious attention to teaching the Cause and living the Bahá'í life with a world-embracing vision.** Certainly, the members of such a well established community as yours, one enjoying the special favors providentially conferred upon it by the Tablets of the Divine Plan, do realize the urgency and seriousness of their task. Surely they see with what patient endurance the dear friends in the Cradle of the Faith are meeting their God-given challenges even to the extent of sacrificing their life's blood so that the world may become a better place. Undoubtedly, the highly esteemed American believers, who bear the designation "spiritual descendants of the Dawn-breakers," know quite well that they must now seize their chance at this critical time to prove their own capacity to endure that living sacrifice which, as Shoghi Effendi said, in contrast to dying, is required of them if they are to fulfill the glorious destiny forecast for them in the scriptures of our Faith. May they be granted the celestial strength to pass, over and over again, the mental tests which 'Abdu'l-Bahá promised He would send to them to purify them, thus enabling them to achieve their divinely conferred potential as a force for change in the world.

In the arena of teaching, your indispensable terms of reference and the unerring resource to which you have ready access are the Master's Tablets of the Divine Plan. They invest your community with extraordinary powers shared by your sister community in Canada. It is in reacquainting the American friends with the special mission, both at home and abroad, assigned to them in these seminal and timeless documents, and in relating their contents to current conditions, that you will find the key to the revitalization of the teaching work and the winning of outstanding victories on the home front. In this effort you will be powerfully aided by the explanations provided in the letters of our dear Guardian, such as *The Advent of Divine Justice*, "The Challenging Requirements of the Present Hour," "American Bahá'ís in the Time of World Peril." We have every confidence that, together with the Continental Counselors and the Auxiliary Board members, you can discover the way further to release the enormous energies of the friends and to intensify the zeal which they have so splendidly displayed in the teaching field on so many occasions in the past.

We were very pleased by the sense you conveyed of an ever-closer relationship between your Assembly and the Continental Counselors, and we were even more deeply impressed by your eagerness to know how you might strengthen this relationship. A beginning towards achieving your desire would be for you to obtain an integrated understanding of the Counselors' responsibilities and sphere of action in relation to your own.

As you know, a distinguishing feature of the Administrative Order is the existence of elected institutions, on the one hand, which function corporately with vested legislative, executive and judicial powers, and of appointed, eminent and devoted believers, on the other hand, who function primarily as individuals for the specific purposes of protecting and propagating the Faith under the guidance of the Head of the Faith. The two sets of institutions collaborate in their functions so as to ensure the progress of the Cause. You are undoubtedly aware of the previous exposition of this subject; however, we offer the following comments to assist your further understanding of the matter.

The Continental Boards of Counselors and the National Spiritual Assemblies share in the functions of propagation and protection, but the Counselors specialize in these functions from a different level and in a different manner. From a continental vantage point, the Counselors bring a perspective to their functions which, when offered to a National Assembly in the form of counsel, advice, recommendations, suggestions or commentary, enriches the latter's understanding, acquaints it with a broader experience than its own, and encourages it to maintain a world-embracing vision.

An aspect of the difference in the manner of functioning of the Counselors derives from the instructions given in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Hands of the Cause of God, the extension into the future of whose functions of protection and propagation is the responsibility of the Counselors. As appointees of the Universal House of Justice, the Counselors assist the Head of the Faith to broaden the base, foster the strength and ensure the security of the National Spiritual Assemblies and the institutions and communities under their jurisdiction. Through their Auxiliary Boards, the Continental Counselors spread the benefits of their functions to the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the grassroots of the community. These functions are shaped by their obligations, in the words of the Will and Testament, "to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things." It can be seen, then, that through their work in propagating and protecting the Faith, the Counselors play a major role in knitting and bolstering the entire fabric of the Bahá'í community.

The flexibility and speed with which the Counselors and their Auxiliary Board members can respond to a perceived need in the community—such as a need for encouragement, explanation of plans, deepening in the Teachings, protection of the Covenant—are elements of their functioning which distinguish them from Spiritual Assemblies; this flexibility enables them to operate as occasions demand, whether it is in giving counsel at a meeting, or advising an individual in private, or helping the friends to understand and obey a ruling of the Spiritual Assembly, or dealing with issues of the Covenant. In such different modes these officers of the Faith are able to draw attention to relevant Texts, to impart information, explore situations, and acquaint themselves with conditions in ways not possible to a Spiritual Assembly but important to the success of its plans. They are able then to share with Spiritual Assemblies, as deemed necessary, ideas, analyses, perceptions and advice which inevitably enhance the ability of these Assemblies to serve their communities. **They thus assist Assemblies to mature. Where Local Assemblies are new or weak, Auxiliary Board members help them to understand their functions, encourage them to organize their work, and rally the local believers in support of their Assemblies' initiatives.

Through the various modes of their activities, the Counselors aided by their Auxiliary Boards spark and buttress the growth and development of Spiritual Assemblies and local and national communities.** With this perspective, Shoghi Effendi's regarding of the Auxiliary Board members as "a prop and mainstay to the often overworked and overburdened National Spiritual Assemblies" becomes clear. The indispensability of the involvement of Continental Counselors and Auxiliary Board members in the planning stages of the teaching work and the benefits of acquainting them with the hopes and concerns of National Spiritual Assemblies and of seeking their advice are also obvious.

With the opening of the fourth epoch of the Formative Age, a procedure was activated by which the goals of national plans are formulated in joint consultations of National Spiritual Assemblies and Continental Counselors. It initiated a new phase in the maturation of the Administrative Order. This development ensures two significant benefits in particular: It enables each institution to draw on the experiences and insights particular to the other, thereby making available to the planning process two distinct channels of information from two levels of Bahá'í administration; and it also assures to the Counselors a necessary familiarity with the background, rationale, and content of national plans, which as a matter of principle they are expected to support. Both institutions obtain strength from such collaboration, and we are particularly pleased that the designing of the Three Year Plan in the United States followed a pattern which involved the two arms of the administration in the manner you described to us.

While the Counselors and their Auxiliary Boards, in addition to the discharge of their specific responsibilities, will support the initiatives adopted by a National Spiritual Assembly, the Assembly should recognize that the Counselors must be free to determine, according to their own best judgment, in what manner that support will be given. There is a great difference between the functions of national committees and Auxiliary Board members in this respect. **Whereas the committees may be required by the Assembly to follow particular procedures, Auxiliary Board members are not similarly bound;** yet they should not act in a manner that undermines the operations of the National Assembly or its agencies. This does not mean that Auxiliary Board members may not decide, upon request or not, to participate in the execution of a particular program or educational project devised by a national committee, or even to contribute towards the conceptualization and fruition of the project. It does mean, however, that **their prerogative to proceed within a wider latitude than that accessible to the national committee should be respected.**

By working at the grassroots of the community, an Auxiliary Board member is often able to satisfy a need not being met by any national or local program, but which if dealt with by the Auxiliary Board member will better equip the local friends to achieve the established goals of the community. Such a flexibility on the part of the Auxiliary Board member in dealing with immediate situations, **such a freedom for independent action, should be taken for granted by all concerned.** However, a pattern of activity on the part of the Auxiliary Board member, or even of a Counselor, which appears to the National Assembly to be seriously diverting attention from the adopted plans of the community should unhesitatingly be made a matter for remedial consultation with the Counselor.

The Counselors are members of a continental, as distinct from a national, institution, and they occupy a rank higher than that of the National Spiritual Assembly. Apart from any other consideration, their rank is, in a practical sense, **a functional necessity** if these officers of the Faith are to be accorded freedom of the community at all levels and their advice and other functions are to be taken seriously. We have said in an earlier letter that "the existence of institutions of such exalted rank, comprising individuals who play such a vital role, who yet have no legislative, administrative or judicial authority, and are entirely devoid of priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations, is a feature of Bahá'í administration unparalleled in the religions of the past." **It is a difficult concept to grasp. But with the passage of time since the first**

contingent of Continental Counselors was appointed, much understanding has surely been acquired.

Shoghi Effendi stated categorically to your Assembly: **"There can be no conflict of authority, no duality under any form or circumstances in any sphere of Bahá'í jurisdiction whether local, national or international."** The authority of a National Assembly is therefore not diminished but, rather, enhanced by the existence of the Continental Counselors, who are duty bound by the very character of their responsibilities as protectors of the Faith to uphold the rank and to support the authority of Spiritual Assemblies. Similarly, the National Assembly must, on the basis of principle and in its own best interest, ensure that Counselors and Auxiliary Board members are not hampered in carrying out their sacred responsibilities and that their right and freedom to function are upheld.

The attitude of these two institutions towards each other should be motivated not merely by a legalistic application of the rules of their functional relationship. Far more is required, for they must, in the first place, approach their joint responsibilities within the framework of the spiritual requisites for all successful Bahá'í relationships. Where love, respect and courtesy are genuinely and mutually expressed, estrangement finds no accommodation and problems become soluble challenges. Bahá'u'lláh's admonition is highly instructive in this regard; He says: "Abase not the station of the learned in Bahá and belittle not the rank of such rulers as administer justice amidst you."

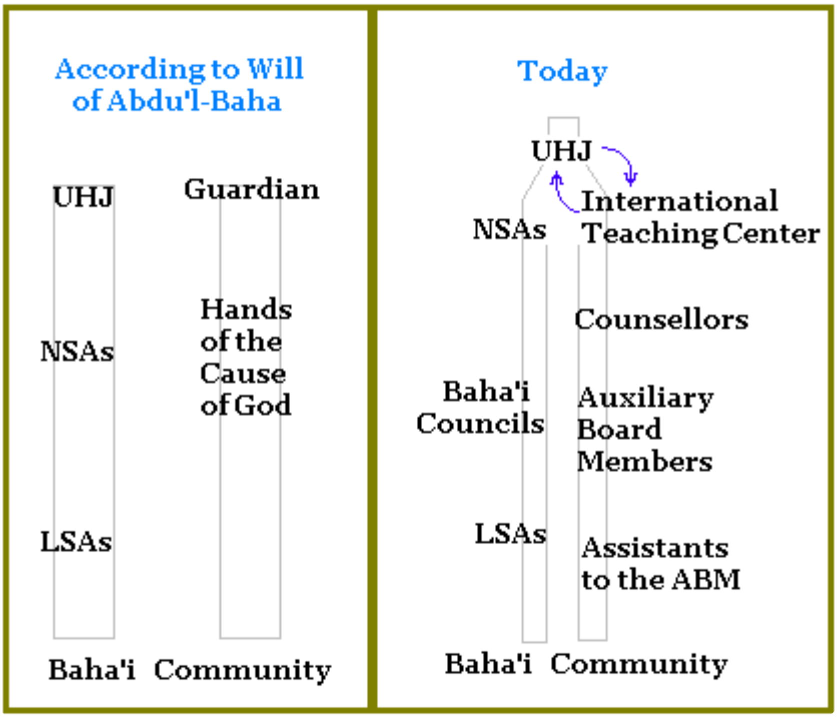
Achieving a closer and more effective relationship between you and the Continental Counselors will depend on the cultivation of an incrementally harmonious attitude and on an openness in your dealings with them which this attitude will certainly facilitate. The relationship between you should be one of fellowship informed with a sense of respect but devoid of the rigid formalities associated with so many social organizations. When you have doubts and concerns about your own plans, confide in the Counselors; when something they do causes you worry, talk to them in the proper spirit of Bahá'í consultation. Remember that they, like yourselves, are burdened with the work of the Cause and are beset with many concerns in its service, and they need your sympathetic understanding of the challenges they face. Open your hearts and your minds to them; regard them as your confidants, your loving friends. And be ever ready to extend to them your hand in support.

The existence of a loving, trusting and informal atmosphere in your dealings with the Counselors **should not, however, be allowed to relax adherence to the rules governing the working relationship between the Continental Board of Counselors and their Auxiliary Boards, on the one hand, and the National Spiritual Assembly and**

its committees, on the other. These matters are explained in detail in our letter of 1 October 1969, which you have published.

We now wish to address the manner of your functioning as a National Spiritual Assembly. Your analysis of the situation identified **the issues of immediate concern about the national administration of the Faith, such issues as: overcentralization,** particularly with regard to the administration of the teaching work; your fear that you may be exercising a level of administrative control that may be stifling individual initiative throughout the country; and the relation of your Assembly to the community.

You live in a society caught in the tightening grip of moral decadence on a vast scale. But this should come as no surprise to you. It is the unavoidable consequence of a pervasive godlessness; its symptoms and repercussions were described in painful detail by Shoghi Effendi in several of his letters to the Western friends. Inevitably, the American Bahá'í community is affected by this condition to some extent. **The corrosive influence of an overbearing and rampant secularization is infecting the style of administration of the Faith in your community and threatening to undermine its efficacy.**


According to Will of Abdu'l-Baha
UHJ
Guardian
NSAs
Hands of the Cause of God
LSAs
Baha'i Community
Today
UHJ
NSAs
International Teaching Center
Counsellors
Baha'i Councils
Auxiliary Board Members
LSAs
Assistants to the ABM
Baha'i Community

Comments

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The aggressiveness and competitiveness which animate a dominantly capitalist culture; **the partisanship inherent in a fervidly democratic**

system; the suspicion of public-policy institutions and the skepticism towards established authority ingrained in the political attitude of the people and which trace their origins to the genesis of American society; the cynical disregard of the moderating principles and rules of civilized human relationships resulting from an excessive liberalism and its immoral consequences—such unsavory characteristics inform entrenched habits of American life, which imperceptibly at first but more obviously in the long run have come to exert too great a sway over the manner of management of the Bahá'í community and over the behavior of portions of its rank and file in relation to the Cause. **This unwholesome influence must be arrested by immediate, deliberate effort**—an effort which must surely begin within your Assembly itself. Further accommodation of it will severely impede the progress of your community, despite the abundant possibilities of an imminent breakthrough. It was due to this concern in particular that we anxiously welcomed your request for a meeting with us.

The guarantee of well-being and success in all your endeavors to serve the Cause of God can be stated in one word: unity. It is the alpha and omega of all Bahá'í objectives. Among the first admonitions addressed to National Spiritual Assemblies by Shoghi Effendi was the following assertion: "It is, I firmly believe, of the utmost urgent importance that, with unity of purpose and action firmly established in our midst, and with every trace of animosity and mistrust of the past banished from our hearts, we should form one united front, and combat, wisely and tactfully, every force that might darken the spirit of the Movement, cause division in its ranks, and narrow it by dogmatic and sectarian belief." He then stated that "it is primarily upon the elected members of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world that this highly important duty devolves," warning that, "should such a representative and responsible body fail to realize this fundamental requisite for all successful achievement, the whole structure is sure to crumble."

Unity within the Assembly itself is, of course, of immediate importance to the wider unity your actions are intended to foster and sustain. At no time can any member of your Assembly afford to be unmindful of this basic requirement nor neglect to work towards upholding it. Of particular relevance is the attitude that the members adopt towards their membership on that exalted body. There needs to be a recognition on their part of the Assembly's spiritual character and a feeling in their hearts of respect for the institution based upon a perception of it as something beyond or apart from themselves, as a sacred entity whose powers they have the privilege to engage and canalize by coming together in harmony and acting in accordance with divinely revealed principles. With such a perspective the members will be able better to acquire an appropriate posture in relation to the Assembly itself, to appreciate their role as Trustees of the Merciful and **to counteract any impression that they have assumed ownership and control of the institution in the manner of major stockholders of a business enterprise.**

Also relevant to effecting unity is the attitude of the friends, whether serving on any Assembly or not, towards the exercise of authority in the Bahá'í community. People generally tend to be suspicious of those in authority. The reason is not difficult to understand, since human history is replete with examples of the disastrous misuse of authority and power. A reversal of this tendency is not easily achievable, but the Bahá'í friends must be freed of suspicion towards their institutions if the wheels of progress are to turn with uninterrupted speed. A rigorous discipline of thought and action on the part of both the friends and the National Assembly will succeed in meeting this challenge; both must live up to their responsibilities in this regard by recognizing some fundamental realities.

The oneness of humanity, which is the primary principle and ultimate goal of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, implies, as Shoghi Effendi said, an "organic change in the structure of present-day society." So fundamental a change in the structural conception of society must also imply a new pattern for the administration of community affairs in a Bahá'í context. The insights offered by the beloved Guardian, as conveyed by his secretary in a letter dated 14 October 1941, shed light on this critical subject:

The friends must never mistake the Bahá'í administration for an end in itself. It is merely the instrument of the spirit of the Faith. This Cause is a Cause which God has revealed to humanity as a whole. It is designed to benefit the entire human race, and the only way it can do this is to reform the community life of mankind, as well as seeking to regenerate the individual. **The Bahá'í Administration is only the first shaping of what in future will come to be the social life and laws of community living.* *

Shoghi Effendi's advice to an individual in another instance provides a further perspective: "He urges you to do all you can to promote unity and love amongst the members of the Community there, as this seems

> to be their greatest need. So often young communities, in their desire to administer the Cause, lose sight of the fact that these spiritual relationships are far more important and fundamental than the rules and regulations which must govern the conduct of community affairs."
>
> It can therefore be deduced that the importance of the Bahá'í administration is its value in serving as a facilitator of the emergence and maintenance of community life in a wholly new mode, and in catering to the requirements of the spiritual relationships which flow from love and unity among the friends. This touches upon a distinguishing characteristic of Bahá'í life which such spiritual relationships foster, namely, the spirit of servitude to God, expressed in service to the Cause, to the friends and to humanity as a whole. The attitude of the individual as a servant, an attitude preeminently exemplified in the life and person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is a dynamic that permeates the activities of the Faith; it acquires collective, transformative force in the normal functioning of a community. In this regard, the institutions of the Faith stand as channels for the promotion of this salient characteristic. **It is in this framework that the concepts of rulership and leadership, authority and power are properly understood and actualized.**
>
> The appearance of a united, firmly based and self-sustaining community must be a major goal of a Spiritual Assembly. Composed of a membership reflecting a diversity of personalities, talents, abilities and interests, such a community requires a level of internal interaction between the Assembly and the body of the believers based on a commonly recognized commitment to service, and in which a sense of partnership based on appreciation of each other's distinctive sphere of action is fully recognized and unfailingly upheld, and no semblance of a dichotomy between the two appears. In such a community leadership is that expression of service by which the Spiritual Assembly invites and encourages the use of the manifold talents and abilities with which the community is endowed, and stimulates and guides the diverse elements of the community towards goals and strategies by which the effects of a coherent force for progress can be realized.

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The maintenance of a climate of love and unity depends largely upon the feeling among the individuals composing the community that the Assembly is a part of themselves, that their cooperative interactions with that divinely ordained body allow them a fair latitude for initiative and that the quality of their relationships with both the institution and their fellow believers encourages a spirit of enterprise invigorated by an awareness of the revolutionizing purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, by a consciousness of the high privilege of their being associated with efforts to realize that purpose, and by a consequent, ever-present sense of joy. In such a climate, the community is transformed from being the mere sum of its parts to assuming a wholly new personality as an entity in which its members blend without losing their individual uniqueness. The possibilities for manifesting such a transformation exist most immediately at the local level, but it is a major responsibility of the National Assembly to nurture the conditions in which they may flourish.

The authority to direct the affairs of the Faith locally, nationally and internationally, is divinely conferred on elected institutions. However, the power to accomplish the tasks of the community resides primarily in the mass of the believers. **The authority of the institutions is an irrevocable necessity for the progress of humanity; its exercise is an art to be mastered.** The power of action in the believers is unlocked at the level of individual initiative and surges at the level of collective volition. In its potential, this mass power, this mix of individual potentialities, exists in a malleable form susceptible to the multiple reactions of individuals to the sundry influences at work in the world. To realize its highest purpose, this power needs to express itself through orderly avenues of activity. **Even though individuals may strive to be guided in their actions by their personal understanding of the Divine Texts, and much can be accomplished thereby, such actions, untempered by the overall direction provided by authorized institutions, are incapable of attaining the thrust necessary for the unencumbered advancement of civilization.**

Individual initiative is a preeminent aspect of this power; it is therefore a major responsibility of the institutions to safeguard and stimulate it. Similarly, it is important for individuals to recognize and accept that the institutions must act as a guiding and moderating influence on the march of civilization. In this sense, the divine requirement that individuals obey the decisions of their Assemblies can clearly be seen as being indispensable to the progress of society. Indeed, individuals must not be abandoned entirely to their own devices with respect to the welfare of society as a whole, neither should they be stifled by the assumption of a dictatorial posture by members of the institutions.

The successful exercise of authority in the Bahá'í community implies the recognition of separate but mutually reinforcing rights and responsibilities between the institutions and the friends in general, a recognition that in turn welcomes the need for cooperation between these two interactive forces of society. As was stated in advice given by Shoghi Effendi: "The individuals and assemblies must learn to cooperate, and to cooperate intelligently, if they desire to adequately discharge their duties and obligations towards the Faith. And no such cooperation is possible without mutual confidence and trust."

Direction comes from Assembly decisions, but its effectiveness depends not only on the clarity with which it is given but also on a number of spiritual and moral factors which must be blended in the general attitude of the individual believers, on the one hand, and the manner and style of the functioning of the Assembly, on the other. The following advice of Shoghi Effendi, addressed in an early letter to the Western friends, deals with these two aspects:

Let us also bear in mind that the keynote to the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand and fellowship, candor and courage on the other.

The duties of those whom the friends have freely and conscientiously elected as their representatives are no less vital and binding than the obligations of those who have chosen them. Their function is not to dictate, but to consult, and consult not only among themselves, but as much as possible with the friends whom they represent. They must regard themselves in no other light but that of chosen instruments for a more efficient and dignified presentation of the Cause of God. They should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should approach their task with extreme humility, and endeavor by their open-mindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candor, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they should serve, but also their esteem and real affection.

[–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(1 child)

These instructions of the beloved Guardian get to the very heart of what must be more deeply internalized by the members of your Assembly at this time. We repeat for emphasis the terms "extreme humility," "open-mindedness," "candor," "modesty"; and we underscore the openness which is implicit in candor, because the cooperation which must be fostered between your Assembly and the friends will depend significantly on the degree to which, with wise discretion, you share your concerns with the community. Your greatest opportunity for this is the annual National Convention, when the representatives of the entire community come together to consult with you. It is not sufficient that you give only good news and encouraging statistics to the delegates. Do as Shoghi Effendi advised you: "Banishing every vestige of secrecy, of undue reticence, of dictatorial aloofness, from their midst, they should radiantly and abundantly unfold to the eyes of the delegates, by whom they are elected, their plans, their hopes, and their cares. They should familiarize the delegates with the various matters that will have to be considered in the current year, and calmly and conscientiously study and weigh the opinions and judgments of the delegates."

Even if the delegates find themselves unable to offer useful recommendations toward the resolution of particular issues, by your bringing them into your confidence, they will develop an appreciation, as would be impossible otherwise, of the serious matters confronting the Cause. With this understanding, they will be equipped to assist the community to respond effectively to your decisions, no matter how challenging these may turn out to be. Moreover, it will relieve you of any overwhelming sense of burden to know that such a responsible body of believers shares your innermost concerns; and even more than that, the effect of your openness will be to strengthen the delegates’ support of your authority, which it is their sacred duty to give. Besides, as it is neither possible nor practicable for your Assembly to meet with all the believers, nor for the members to be constantly traveling throughout the community, the friends’ feeling that you are remote can be ameliorated, though not entirely removed, by the effectiveness of your interactions with the delegates.

In your openness and candor you will, no doubt, avoid ineptitudes that pass as norms in the freedom of speech practiced in your nation. In a society where "telling it like it is" employs a style of expression which robs language of its decorum, and in a time when stridency is commonly presumed to be a quality of leadership, candor is crass, and authority speaks in a loud and vulgar voice. People are frequently obliged to receive direction from their leaders in such disrespectful modes; this is a reason for resentment and suspicion towards those in authority. By contrast, Bahá'í institutions have the task of accustoming the friends to recognizing the expression of authority in language at a moderate pitch.

It would be impossible to overestimate the obligation resting upon you to refine your dealings with the community in the ways already described. You cannot at any time afford to forget that the manner of the use of authority is critical to the success of your work. With this in mind, you must also attend seriously to the behavior of those, more particularly your officers, who must of necessity act on your behalf in carrying out your decisions and conveying your instructions to others. **Further, it is sometimes the case that staff members at your National Center, in their eagerness to be exactly and completely obedient, carry out the instruction of your Assembly with a sharpness of manner and tone that hurts people and provokes resentment against the very body the staff are striving to serve with loyalty and devotion.** The staff should be sensitized to the situation and made to realize, through your loving and persistent guidance, that the spiritual requisites for good and respectful relations with others must be conscientiously applied in their interactions with the friends because to do so is not only virtuous in itself but will also minimize the incidence of bad feeling towards your Assembly.

The temperament of authority in the administration of justice varies according to the degree of the gravity of each case. **Some cases require that the Assembly take action that is firm or drastic. Even so, Assembly members have always to be mindful that the authority they wield must in general be expressed with love, humility and a genuine respect for others. Thus exercised, authority strikes a natural note and accords with that which is acceptable to spiritually attuned and fair-minded souls.** The following guidance of Shoghi Effendi, as conveyed by his secretary, is especially relevant: "The administrators of the Faith of God must be like unto shepherds. Their aim should be to dispel all the doubts, misunderstandings and harmful differences which may arise in the community of the believers. And this they can adequately achieve provided they are motivated by a true sense of love for their fellow-brethren coupled with firm determination to act with justice in all cases which are submitted to them for their consideration."

Do clearly bear in mind that our emphasis of the spiritual requisites of your functioning is not a mere expression of pious idealism. Far, far from it. Their exclusion from public discourse and from the considerations of world leaders largely accounts for the current state of society. Indeed, they are as practical in effect as they are spiritual in essence. Employ them consciously, constantly,

> confidently; and see how your actions will attract the confirmations of the Holy Spirit in the response of the community.
>
> As to your worry about overcontrolling the friends: by appreciating the nature of the power of action which they possess, you will be able to gauge how best to guide and direct them. A wide latitude for action must be allowed them, which means that a large margin for mistakes must also be allowed. Your National Assembly and the Local Assemblies must not react automatically to every mistake, but distinguish between those that are self-correcting with the passage of time and do no particular harm to the community and those which require Assembly intervention. Related to this is the tendency of the friends to criticize each other at the slightest provocation, whereas the Teachings call upon them to encourage each other. Such tendencies are of course motivated by a deep love for the Faith, a desire to see it free of any flaw. But human beings are not perfect. The Local Assemblies and the friends must be helped through your example and through loving counsel to refrain from such a pattern of criticism, which stunts the growth and development of the community. You should also be fearful of laying down too many rules and regulations. The Cause is not so fragile that a degree of mistakes cannot be tolerated. When you feel that certain actions may become trends with harmful consequences, you may, instead of making a new rule, discuss the matter with the Counselors, enlisting their support in educating the friends in a manner that will improve their understanding and their conduct.
>
> A new burst of energy would accrue to the operation of the Three Year Plan if the friends, both individually and collectively, could feel a greater sense of freedom to engage in a wide range of activities originating with themselves. Even if you are doing nothing deliberately to discourage such freedom, their accumulated impression of institutional disapproval, however derived, and their fear of criticism are, to a considerable extent, inhibiting their exercise of initiative. At this exact time in history when the peoples of the world are weighed down with soul-crushing difficulties and the shadow of despair threatens to eclipse the light of hope, there must be revived among the individual believers a sense of mission, a feeling of empowerment to minister to the urgent need of humanity for guidance and thus to win victories for the Faith in their own sphere of life. The community as a whole should be involved in efforts to resolve such issues. A single answer would, of course, be inadequate, there being so many diverse elements and interests in the community. These matters require not only your own independent consultation but consultation with the Counselors as well. Although Spiritual Assemblies are good at specifying goals, they have not yet mastered the art of making use of the talents of individuals and rousing the mass of the friends to action in fulfillment of such goals. Removing this deficiency would be a

mark of the maturation of these institutions. May your Assembly lead the way.

A further decentralization of the national administration would increase the possibility of loosening control at the top and encouraging the involvement of individuals in the work of the community at the grassroots. We therefore welcome your intention to take such action. However, you may wish to do this in incremental steps rather than in one sweeping motion. The matter is left entirely to your judgment. It may encourage you to know that in a few countries where the challenge of administering the teaching work and providing other administrative services assumed formidable proportions, various approaches have been used to achieve a measure of decentralization. A detailed description of some of these approaches will be sent to you separately.

[–]A35821363[S]0 points1 point2 points4 months ago(0 children)

Having said all the foregoing, we pause to assure you of our full awareness of the great burdens you carry and of the ceaseless calls upon you to render services in the absence of adequate resources. Do not despair. Your capacity to respond will match any challenge that may confront you in these troubled times; you have only to act on principle. Your community's past has been glorious; its future is great beyond calculation. The divine promises to your community are certain; the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh are assured as you strive to fulfill His purpose. The wings of the beloved Master remain spread over you that you may succeed in discharging the tasks He has especially entrusted to your care. And our love ever surrounds you and your cherished community, growing stronger at every moment. Step forward then to meet the requirements of the hour with undiminished hope and confidence.

The power released by Bahá'u'lláh works at a quickening pace, speeding the processes of change which must usher in the new order He proclaimed. The declining state of society demonstrates it, the global yearning for new solutions to human problems confirms it. Much is at stake: **the fortunes of humankind hang precariously in the balance. The Bahá'í community bears grave responsibilities toward the near and far future as movement towards the Lesser Peace accelerates.** Now is the time for the friends to seize new opportunities to extend the range and influence of the Faith, to reach a new level of action in expanding the community and fortifying its foundations. It is indeed time for audacious action undeterred by a fear of mistakes, fired by the urgency of ministering to the pressing needs of humanity. Will the American Bahá'í

> community not see its chance to meet the challenge? Will its members not once again blaze a trail that can set in motion a myriad victories?
>
> Our ardent petition at the Holy Threshold is that the response of the champion-builders of the New World Order will be immediate, wholehearted and abundantly confirmed.
>
> With loving Bahá’í greetings,
>
> [signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Original Index: 122 | Current Position: 135

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 2009, A LITTLE OVER ONE YEAR AFTER THE ARREST OF THE YARAN, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO IRANIAN BELIEVERS.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 19. On this date in 2009, a little over one year after the arrest of the Yaran, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to Iranian believers.

[AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

19 May 2009

To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith

Dearly loved Friends,

From National Conventions conducted across the globe over the past few weeks, there resounded expressions of the love and sympathy that Bahá'ís everywhere, proud to be counted as your spiritual brothers and sisters, hold for you in their hearts. Aware of the spiritual energies released by your steadfastness and sacrifice and reinforced thereby, they are engaged in defending your rights, propagating the Bahá'í teachings, and contributing to the well-being of the world of humanity.

Included among the many communications referred to in our letter dated 14 May 2009 are reports of the unprecedented rise you have witnessed in opportunities to dispel from the minds of your fellow citizens misunderstandings regarding the history and teachings of the Faith. That you have demonstrated increasing resilience, holding fast to your beliefs and carrying out your spiritual obligations despite intensified persecution, has had far-reaching effects, the implications of which cannot as yet be adequately appreciated. **Only time will reveal the full significance of the momentous events which have converged upon you in recent years. Especially noteworthy in this respect are the growing eagerness of the Iranian people to understand the true character of the Faith and the rising awareness among the youth of your country that a new source of hope for the future is to be found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Your hearts thus assured, we urge you to move forward, wisely and within the framework of the guidance laid out in our previous communications, to discharge your individual spiritual responsibilities.**

A number of you have raised questions in your letters that revolve around the theme of strengthening the community. This, indeed, is a matter of fundamental importance, and every believer would do well to bear its requirements in mind. Already you have seen in the unity of thought and action achieved among the believers, in their enthusiasm and fellowship, the effect that performing your individual spiritual responsibilities has on the life of the community. There are a host of other factors that enhance the vitality of community life as well. Chief among them are the spiritual education provided to children and youth, opportunities created to deepen understanding of the teachings, gatherings held to celebrate the Nineteen Day Feast and to mark other occasions, efforts made to foster and maintain unity in all matters, assistance offered to young people and families in need, and the time spent visiting with friends and neighbours in their homes, engaging in meaningful conversation and weaving bonds of affection and solidarity.

To the degree that the principles and spirit of the Faith are reflected in the character of the community, its vitality will show forth and its individual and collective endeavours increase in efficacy. Present circumstances, which require you to carry on in the absence of the Yárán and the Khádimín and the inspiration and aid they provide, will demand of each of you new levels of tolerance and discipline, as well as a commitment to encourage and support one another. At the same time you should recognize that, as your individual activities take on a more outward-looking orientation, the management of the internal affairs of the community will grow easier.

The discharge of the foregoing individual and collective responsibilities forms part of Bahá'í identity; it is one of the commitments to which every follower of Bahá'u'lláh is held. Such expressions of your belief are well within recognized standards of individual human rights. Continue, then, to carry them out with confidence and vigour, guided by the dictates of wisdom, faithful to civil law, and sensitive to social conditions.

Our letter to you dated 18 March 2009 called attention to the role consultation plays in raising the community's level of maturity and in enhancing its effectiveness. Thus, we were pleased to note from your recent letters its more widespread practice among the believers. The law of consultation, as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, is a fundamental teaching of the Faith. He tells us that through consultation the "maturity of the gift of understanding" is made manifest. "It is and will always be", He states, "a cause of awareness and of awakening and a source of good and well-being." "Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude", He further asserts. "It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth." Consultation paves the path of individual and collective endeavour. The growth, progress, and enduring unity of the community are ensured by its practice. It is indispensable for the ordering of human affairs. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá refers to consultation as “the cause of great victories”, assuring us that “it attracteth the aid and bestowal of God.”

As you know, Bahá’í consultation is to be undertaken with the utmost love, sincerity, and unity. Its participants must come together in a prayerful attitude, seeking assistance from the Realm of Glory, expressing their thoughts freely, surrendering all attachment to their individual opinions, and giving fair-minded and careful consideration to the views of others, in an effort to reach consensus. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá advises us that should it be found, in the course of coming to a decision, that discussion has become prolonged or given rise to disputation, consultation should be deferred and taken up at a more propitious time. **Be confident that, as you engage in Bahá’í consultation among families or in small groups, your sincere efforts to abide by these principles will, through the power of the Covenant and with Divine assistance, enable you to resolve a great majority of the issues that confront you.** Of course, it must be remembered that the purpose of consultation need not always be to arrive at a particular or final decision. Often the aim may simply be to engage in an exchange of views so as to help clarify a certain matter and bring about unity of vision. Further, you should recognize that, given current circumstances, there may be issues that cannot be resolved at present and which should be left for future consideration.

Some of you have enquired about the Nineteen Day Feast, the observance of which is ordained by Bahá’u’lláh in His Most Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Since the early days of the Faith, the Feast has been a distinctive feature of your spiritual and social life, essential to the development of the individual and the community, and it should continue to be observed with wisdom and with consideration for local circumstances. Within the context of the clear guidance regarding its nature and purpose, you have a wide degree of latitude in which to organize and conduct such meetings.

We remember you often in the Holy Shrines and offer prayers of gratitude for your steadfastness. In you we see these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made manifest:

O spiritual friends and loved ones of the All-Merciful!

In every Age believers are many but the tested are few. Render ye praise unto God ye that are tested believers, that ye have been subjected to every kind of trial and ordeal in the path of the supreme Lord. In the fire of ordeals, your faces have flushed aglow like unto pure gold, and amidst the flames of cruelty and oppression which the wicked had kindled, ye suffered yourselves to be consumed while remaining all the time patient. Thus ye have initiated every believer into the ways of steadfastness and fortitude.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

Original Index: 123 | Current Position: 136

MAY 19. ON THIS DATE IN 2015, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE EXPLAINED "WHY SUCH TERMS AS “ALLÁH-U-ABHÁ” AND “YÁ BAHÁ’U’L-ABHÁ” ARE USED BY BAHÁ’ÍS RATHER THAN BEING TRANSLATED INTO THEIR NATIVE TONGUES."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 19. On this date in 2015, the Universal House of Justice explained "why such terms as “Alláh-u-Abhá” and “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” are used by Bahá’ís rather than being translated into their native tongues."

19 May 2015

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

Your email letter of 10 March 2015, asking on behalf of a fellow believer whether it is appropriate to translate the phrase “Alláh-u-Abhá” into another language for purposes of its recitation 95 times a day, has been received at the Bahá’í World Centre and forwarded to our Office for reply. The following has been provided in response to a similar query posed to the Universal House of Justice on a previous occasion:

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 29 December 2008, asking why such terms as “Alláh-u-Abhá” and “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” are used by Bahá’ís rather than being translated into their native tongues, and has asked us to respond as follows.

The House of Justice on another occasion has clarified that the Greatest Name is to be used in its original language for the recitation of “Alláh-u-Abhá” 95 times a day, as well as for its use in the Long Obligatory Prayer and the Prayer for the Dead. It has also clarified that to translate words such as “Alláh-u-Abhá”, “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá”, “Mashriqu’l-Adhkár” and “Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds” into one’s native language is not acceptable. One exception to this is the alternative use of the words “Right of God” or their equivalent into other languages while the term “Ḥuqúqu’lláh” gradually becomes a part of Bahá’í vocabulary.

In general, one should bear in mind that all translations are, to some degree, inadequate. For instance, the beloved Guardian has pointed out in ... God Passes By that the word “Bahá” signifies at once the “Glory”, the “Splendour” and the “Light” of God; there is no single word in English which can express all these. It is, of course, desirable that there be no loss of meaning through translation; thus, it is preferable that certain terms directly related to the Manifestation of God remain in their original form.

(From a letter dated 22 February 2009 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Office of Correspondence

On February 1, 2018, the Universal House of Justice wrote "That the Arabic Bahá’í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted."

Persian translation of Arabic verses

Universal House of Justice

Transmitted by email

Dear Bahá’í Friend,

1 February 2018

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 7 November 2014 about the translation of the Arabic Writings into Persian. It has considered your questions regarding this matter and has instructed us to write to you as follows. The delay in doing so is deeply regretted.

That the Arabic Bahá’í Writings are not translated into the Persian language is based on guidance of the beloved Guardian. There are no authorized Persian translations of any of the Arabic Writings, and publication of any Persian translation of the full text of an Arabic Sacred Text is not permitted. In his letters to believers in Iran, Shoghi Effendi also exhorted the friends to recite the Obligatory Prayers in Arabic. However, drawing upon an individual’s translation of these Prayers or other Tablets in order to aid one’s understanding is, of course, permissible, although such personal translations should not be recited in Bahá’í gatherings. No issue should be made of what individuals do in private prayer.

Latitude has likewise been given to using a personal translation or a gist of a passage in Persian for the purpose of enhancing understanding of the Writings, and these may be shared for this purpose with a few others — for instance, in the context of a study group. Further, the House of Justice has previously indicated that adding diacriticals to the Arabic words and explaining the meaning of difficult words are also acceptable means of assisting the friends to gain a better understanding of the Writings in Arabic.

In light of a number of factors, Tajik and Persian are for practical purposes treated differently.

It is hoped that the above information will be of assistance. You may rest assured of the loving prayers of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

To summarize rules of Bahá'í translations...

Arabic works cannot be translated into Persian.

Persian works cannot be translated into Arabic.

Persian and Arabic works can be translated "into Oriental languages such as Turkish and Urdu."

Persian and Arabic works can be translated into English.

Persian and Arabic works cannot be translated into European languages.

English works can be translated into European languages.

For further reading, please see "Persian, Arabic, and Provisional Translations", "Translation and provisional translations", "Unveiling the Hidden Words, by Diana Malouf: Commentary on "Translating the Hidden Words,' review by Franklin Lewis", a letter dated June 27, 1933 from Shoghi Effendi to Adelbert Mühlschlegel about Bahá'í orthography, a letter dated June 30, 1999 from the Universal House of Justice outlining its procedures for approving provisional as opposed to authorized translations, and a letter dated February 15, 1957 from Shoghi Effendi to French Bahá'ís.

Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá

Comments

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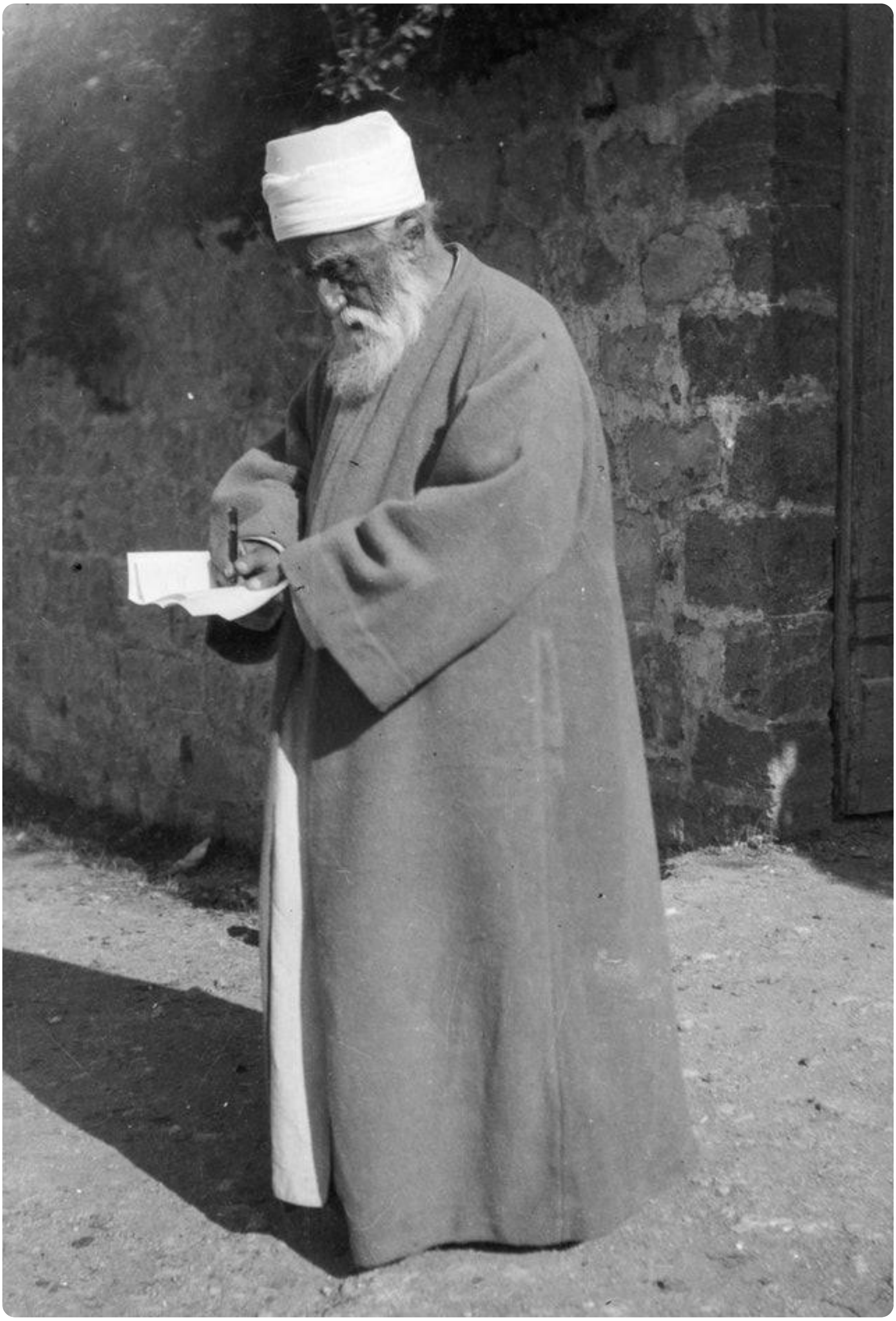
Alláh-u-Abhá” and “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá 🙏🤲

MAY 20. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ SAID "AMONG OTHER HISTORICAL WOMEN WAS CATHERINE I, WIFE OF PETER THE GREAT. RUSSIA AND TURKEY WERE AT WAR. MUHAMMAD PÁSHÁ, COMMANDER OF THE TURKISH FORCES, HAD DEFEATED PETER AND WAS ABOUT TO TAKE ST. PETERSBURG..."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 20. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "Among other historical women was Catherine I, wife of Peter the Great. Russia and Turkey were at war. Muhammad Páshá, commander of the Turkish forces, had defeated Peter and was about to take St. Petersburg. The Russians were in a most critical position. Catherine, the wife of Peter, said, "I will arrange this matter." She had an interview with Muhammad Páshá, negotiated a treaty of peace and induced him to turn back. She saved her husband and her nation. This was a great accomplishment. Afterward she was crowned Empress of Russia and ruled with wisdom until her death."

Among other historical women was Catherine I, wife of Peter the Great. Russia and Turkey were at war. Muhammad Páshá, commander of the Turkish forces, had defeated Peter and was about to take St. Petersburg. The Russians were in a most critical position. Catherine, the wife of Peter, said, "I will arrange this matter." She had an interview with Muhammad Páshá, negotiated a treaty of peace and induced him to turn back. She saved her husband and her nation. This was a great accomplishment. Afterward she was crowned Empress of Russia and ruled with wisdom until her death.



Comments

Original Index: 125 | Current Position: 138

MAY 20. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ SAID "THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA BY COLUMBUS WAS DURING THE REIGN OF ISABELLA OF SPAIN, TO WHOSE INTELLIGENCE AND ASSISTANCE THIS WONDERFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS LARGELY DUE."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 20. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "The discovery of America by Columbus was during the reign of Isabella of Spain, to whose intelligence and assistance this wonderful accomplishment was largely due."

The discovery of America by Columbus was during the reign of Isabella of Spain, to whose intelligence and assistance this wonderful accomplishment was largely due. In brief, many remarkable women have appeared in the history of the world, but further mention of them is not necessary.

On April 23, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a speech at Howard University, telling the audience "Praise be to God! You are like the whites; there are no great distinctions left...How they fought and sacrificed until they freed the blacks!...It was for your sake that the whites of America made such an effort. Were it not for this effort, universal emancipation would not have been proclaimed... In short, you must be very thankful to the whites who were the cause of your freedom in America....Now — praise be to God! — everyone is free and lives in tranquillity."

But I wish to say one thing in order that the blacks may become grateful to the whites and the whites become loving toward the blacks. If you go to Africa and see the blacks of Africa, you will realize how much progress you have made. **Praise be to God! You are like the whites; there are no great distinctions left. But the blacks of Africa are treated as servants. The first proclamation of emancipation for the blacks was made by the whites of America. How they fought and sacrificed until they freed the blacks!** Then it spread to other places. The blacks of Africa were in complete bondage, but your emancipation led to their freedom also — that is, the European states emulated the Americans, and the emancipation proclamation became universal. It was for your sake that the whites of America made such an effort. Were it not for this effort, universal emancipation would not have been proclaimed.

Therefore, you must be very grateful to the whites of America, and the whites must become very loving toward you so that you may progress in all human grades. Strive jointly to make extraordinary progress and mix together completely. In short, you must be very thankful to the whites who were the cause of your freedom in America. Had you not been freed, other blacks would not have been freed either. **Now — praise be to God! — everyone is free and lives in tranquillity.** I pray that you attain to such a degree of good character and behavior that the names of black and white shall vanish. All shall be called human, just as the name for a flight of doves is dove. They are not called black and white. Likewise with other birds.

Later in 1912, on September 2, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk elaborating his views on Africans, indigenous North Americans, native peoples, and pre-Columbian America at the Montreal home of William Sutherland Maxwell (later named a Hand of the Cause by Shoghi Effendi in 1951) and May Maxwell, the parents of Mary Maxwell, the future Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, wife of Shoghi Effendi.

Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed at the Maxwell's home during his stay in Montreal in 1912, the home was later designated a Bahá'í Shrine. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum described the importance of this Shrine with the following words:

Things arise in historic perspective as time goes by. This is the only private home in Canada where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed. After His visit, it was always considered blessed by having been used by Him. For future generations, it will eventually grow in importance and sacredness, because He, the Centre of the Covenant, the Greatest Mystery of God, stayed here.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk on September 2, 1912 is as follows...

Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds—that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. **The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.**

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such training and cultivation in the human world—no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. **Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable—vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers—a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.**

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendors of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

Comments

MAY 20. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, "WHILE RIDING IN MR MILLS'S AUTOMOBILE, THE MASTER SAID: 'YOU WILL LEARN OF THE VALUE OF THIS AUTOMOBILE LATER BECAUSE IT WILL BE SAID THAT THE SERVANTS OF THE BLESSED BEAUTY SAT IN IT.'"

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 20. On this date in 1912, "While riding in Mr Mills's automobile, the Master said: 'You will learn of the value of this automobile later because it will be said that the servants of the Blessed Beauty sat in it.'"

From Mahmúd's Diary, under the entry titled "Monday, May 20, 1912"...

Monday, May 20, 1912

[New York]

Among those visiting the Master at the Kinney's home were some narrow-minded Christian ministers. He spoke to them about the misunderstandings among Christians about Islam. After the Master spoke emphatically with reasoning and proofs to establish the reality of Islam, the ministers left humbly and joyfully, impressed by His explanations.

In the evening an enthusiastic gathering of women suffragists gathered to hear the Master's address. [109] While riding in Mr Mills's automobile, the Master said: `You will learn of the value of this automobile later because it will be said that the servants of the Blessed Beauty sat in it.'

When He entered the gathering, the entire audience stood with great joy and excitement. The chairman of the meeting [Mrs Penfield] first gave an introductory account of the persecutions and imprisonment of the Master and explained the meaning of the name `Abdu'l-Bahá. The Master then spoke at length about the education and rights of women. There was great excitement in the audience, and, as in other gatherings, the people were deeply moved and both men and women shook His hand, supplicating for assistance.

109. The Woman's Suffrage Meeting was held at the Metropolitan Temple, Seventh Avenue and Fourteenth Street, New York. For transcripts of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk see *Promulgation*, pp. 133-7 and *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 8, pp. 15-20.)

Comments

MAY 20. ON THIS DATE IN 1952, A LETTER WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI ADDRESSED TO A CANADIAN BAHÁ'Í, NOTED THAT "THE GUARDIAN WAS HAPPY TO LEARN OF THE SUCCESS YOU ARE HAVING IN YOUR TEACHING WORK, ESPECIALLY WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 20. On this date in 1952, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi addressed to a Canadian Bahá'í, noted that "the Guardian was happy to learn of the success you are having in your teaching work, especially with the Jewish people." An online network of Bahá'ís of Jewish background believes that the rule prohibiting teaching of the Bahá'í Faith in Israel should be re-examined.

20 May 1952

To an individual believer

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Your letter of May 4th has been received, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He deeply appreciates your great devotion to the Faith. The Guardian was happy to learn of the success you are having in your teaching work, especially with the Jewish people. He wishes me to assure you that he will pray for those whom you have succeeded in attracting to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and that your own efforts may be richly blessed.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

R. Rabbani

Assuring you of my loving prayers for your success and spiritual advancement,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

MAY 20. ON THIS DATE IN 1971, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF THE U.S. "A BELIEVER CANNOT ESCAPE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPULSION BY THE RUSE OF RESIGNING FROM THE FAITH IN ORDER TO BREAK ITS LAW WITH IMPUNITY."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 20. On this date in 1971, the UHJ wrote the NSA of the U.S. "a believer cannot escape administrative expulsion by the ruse of resigning from the Faith in order to break its law with impunity."

203. Believer Cannot Escape Expulsion by Resignation in Order to Break Law with Impunity

"As you know, a believer cannot escape administrative expulsion by the ruse of resigning from the Faith in order to break its law with impunity. However, the Assembly should be satisfied that there was indeed such an ulterior motive behind the withdrawal. A believer's record of inactivity and his general attitude to the Faith may well lead the Assembly to conclude that his withdrawal was bona fide, even though immediately succeeded by marriage, and in such a case the withdrawal may be accepted."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, May 20, 1971)

Comments

MAY 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1933, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "NO BAHÁ'Í CAN ANY LONGER DISSIMULATE HIS FAITH AND PRACTISE THE LAWS AND ORDINANCES OF A PREVIOUS DISPENSATION AND CALL HIMSELF AT THE SAME TIME A BELIEVER. NO COMPROMISE, NO VACILLATION CAN ANY LONGER BE TOLERATED. WE MUST HAVE THE ..."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 21. On this date in 1933, a letter from Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer stated that "No Bahá'í can any longer dissimulate his faith and practise the laws and ordinances of a previous dispensation and call himself at the same time a believer. No compromise, no vacillation can any longer be tolerated. We must have the courage of our convictions and preserve the integrity of our glorious Cause."

531. We Must Have the Courage of Our Convictions

"...No Bahá'í can any longer dissimulate his faith and practise the laws and ordinances of a previous dispensation and call himself at the same time a believer. No compromise, no vacillation can any longer be tolerated. We must have the courage of our convictions and preserve the integrity of our glorious Cause...."

(Postscript by the Guardian to a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer, May 21, 1933)

On February 12, 1956, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer addressing "Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc." explaining "that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character."

1389. Why Bahá'ís Are Requested to Withdraw from Membership in the Church, Synagogue, etc.

"The point is not that there is something intrinsically wrong with Masonry, which no doubt has many very high ideals and principles, and has had a very good influence in the past.

"The reasons why the Guardian feels that it is imperative for the Bahá'ís to be dissociated from masonry at this time, and I might add, other secret associations, is that we are the building blocks of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order ... the Bahá'ís should be absolutely independent, and stand identified only with their own teachings. That is why they are requested to withdraw from membership in the church, the synagogue, or whatever other previous religious organization they may have been affiliated with, to have nothing whatsoever to do with secret societies, or with political movements, etc. It protects the Cause, it reinforces the Cause, and it asserts before all the world its independent character.

"Another reason is that unfortunately the tremendous political influences in the world today are seeping deeper and deeper into men's minds; and movements which in the past were absolutely uninfluenced by any political tinge of thought now in many places are becoming infiltrated with political side-taking and political issues; and it becomes all the more important for the Bahá'ís to withdraw from them in order to protect the Faith.

"The Guardian believes that you, as an intelligent man, a Bahá'í, will see the need for this. It is only by all living according to general principles that we can knit the fabric of the Faith all over the world into a closer unity.

"He is fully aware that certain individuals are struck much more forcibly by such requests than others. This has been the case with some of the old Bahá'ís in England, who have been Masons from their boyhood on; but, as it is his duty to protect the Faith, he can only appeal to the Bahá'ís to assist him in doing so; and to consider the general good, rather than their personal feelings, however deep they may be, in such matters."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 12, 1956)

'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously permitted membership in freemason lodges and non-Bahá'í religious organizations.

During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the following interaction with a Christian...

A student of the modern methods of the higher criticism asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he would do well to continue in the church with which he had been associated all his life, and whose language was full of meaning to him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "**You must not dissociate**

yourself from it. Know this; the Kingdom of God is not in any Society; some seekers go through many Societies as a traveller goes through many cities till he reach his destination. If you belong to a Society already do not forsake your brothers. **You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán.** The number nine contains eight, and seven, and all the other numbers, and does not deny any of them. Do not distress or deny anyone by saying 'He is not a Bahá'í!'

During his tour of North America in 1912, coverage in news stories would report this comment.

For example, on February 18, 1912, an article in "The Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Press" featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion, in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religions. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case may be, and still being thorough going Bahis." During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

And on February 28, 1912, the "SFO Daily News" of San Francisco featured an article stating "In some respects the Bahá'í movement is the most remarkable of modern times. It isn't a religion in the sense that Christianity and Mohammedism and other faiths are religious. Its followers belong to many diverse sects, remaining Christian or Mohammedan or Brahmin as the case mya be, and still being thorough going Bahá'ís" During his visit to London in 1911, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that "You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, a Bahá'í-Muḥammadán."

Similarly, on September 1, 1912, "The Oregonian" of Portland, Oregon carried an article about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, introducing him as the "Leader of Religions Movement Which Claims Three Million Followers" and quoting his statement "When in London he was approached by a student of higher criticism who asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá if he should continue in the church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Yes, you must not dissociate yourself from it. Know this: the Kingdom of God is not in any society. If you belong to a society already do not forsake your brothers. You can be a Bahá'í-Christian, a Bahá'í-Freemason, a Bahá'í-Jew, Bahá'í-Mohammedan."

In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had encouraged the Bahá'ís of Manchester to emulate the freemasons...

October 1921

In the Name of God! O Sincere Servant of the Blessed Beauty!

Your detailed letter has been received, and has been the cause of the utmost joy and gladness. Praise be to God! The loved ones are all astir and active, but prudence is necessary. You have rent the veil too widely asunder. Explain to the loved ones that the rending of the veil to such an extent will be the cause of great agitation, and the harm thereof will reach to the Holy Land. Great caution is necessary. Discourses in churches and great public gatherings are in no wise permitted as in this place enemies, within and without, are lying in wait and are bent on aggression. Prudence requires that activity should, for the present, be concealed and carried on with the utmost moderation. Convey to the loved ones, one and all, on my behalf, the greatest longing, love and kindness. Give a spiritual message from me to Mr. Healds and say unto him: “Peruse the Gospel, how His Holiness Christ – may my life be a sacrifice to Him – says, ‘Conceal it, that the Pharisees may not be informed thereof.’ Now the same condition prevails.”

This matter is of the greatest importance. On no account let them contribute articles to the newspapers, and so long as they are not sure of any soul, let them breath no word to him. Consider how the Freemasons have for two hundred years carried on their work, and unto this day they have not openly declared it to any soul. Not until they find a hearing ear will they speak. The loved ones too must proceed with the greatest prudence, lest serious difficulties be created. If any one should travel to the Holy Land, he must on no account declare to anyone by the way that his purpose is to visit us. The loved ones must, in the presence of strangers, speak forth simply the teachings of the Blessed Beauty and mention no word of the belief concerning Him. Should anyone inquire, “What is your belief regarding the Blessed Beauty?” let them answer: “We regard Him as the foremost teacher and educator of these later ages and Abdu’l-Baha as the Centre of His Covenant.”

The original scanned document can be found at http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/docs/vol13/Barstow_600-623.pdf , where it is labeled BC#608. It was published through H-Net's Documents on the Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Movements.

Numerous statements by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice would later contradict these statements, with Bahá’ís being explicity prohibited from associating with any other faiths.

On July 24, 1953, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan stated that "So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not...they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present

Administrative Order. When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere."

1384. Affiliation with Faith Alone is Insufficient

"So far as non-Bahá'ís affiliating with the Bahá'í Faith is concerned, either a person becomes a Bahá'í and accepts Bahá'u'lláh as the divine Manifestation for this day, or he does not. The tenets of the Bahá'í Faith are simple as outlined by the Guardian, but they do not permit of any variations. In other words, if any members of the ... Movement wish to become Bahá'ís, they will be most welcome; but they can only become Bahá'ís on the basis of accepting Bahá'u'lláh as a divine Manifestation, and of course, with this goes the acceptance of the Bab as the Forerunner, and Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, and the present Administrative Order.

"When a person has reached the sea of immortality, it is idle to keep seeking elsewhere...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Spiritual Assembly of Japan, July 24, 1953: Japan Will Turn Ablaze, pp. 76-77)

For example, on August 5, 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to an individual believer...

1387. Bahá'ís Belonging to Churches, Synagogues, Freemasonry and the Like

"**As regards the question of Bahá'ís belonging to churches, synagogues, Freemasonry, etc.,** the friends must realize that now that the Faith is over 100 years old, and its own institutions arising, so to speak, rapidly above-ground, the distinctions are becoming ever sharper, and **the necessity for them to support whole-heartedly their own institutions and cut themselves off entirely from those of the past, is now clearer than ever before.** The eyes of the people of the world are beginning to be focused on us; and, as humanity's plight goes from bad to worse, we will be watched ever more intently by non-Bahá'ís, to see whether we do uphold our own institutions wholeheartedly; whether we are the people of the new creation or not; whether we live up to our beliefs, principles and laws in deed as well as word. We cannot be too careful. We cannot be too exemplary.

"There is another aspect to this question which the friends should seriously ponder, and that is that, whereas organizations such as Freemasonry may have been in the past entirely free from any political taint, in the state of flux the world is in at present, and the extraordinary way in which things become corrupted and tainted by political thought and influences, there is no guarantee that such an association might not gradually or suddenly become a political instrument. The less Bahá'ís have to do, therefore, with such things, the better."

On November 21, 1968, a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland stated that "If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í...one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization...For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians."

532. On Becoming a Bahá'í Should Withdraw from Church

"If a person is registered as a member of a church or similar religious organization he should withdraw from it on becoming a Bahá'í.

"In the case of new believers, it should be made clear to them in the course of teaching them the Faith that one cannot be a Bahá'í and also a member of another religious organization. This is simply a matter of straight-forwardness and honesty. A great part of the teaching of Jesus Christ concerned His Second Coming and the preparation of His followers to be ready for it. The Bahá'ís believe He has come. No Christian Church believes this; on the contrary, they either look for Him still, or have ceased to believe that He will come. For a Bahá'í to be a member of a community which holds such beliefs is disloyalty to Christ and hypocrisy towards the Christians.

"You should not formalize the method by which the withdrawal from the church is to be made, and certainly nothing should be added to a declaration form, if you use one. It should be left to the Local Spiritual Assembly which is accepting the declaration to satisfy itself, as it deems best in each case, that the new believer has already resigned from the church, or does so within a reasonable time of his declaration.

"In regard to the old believers, your Assembly should tactfully, and in a kindly way, make the Bahá'í position clear to them and gently persuade them to resign from their former churches. This is a matter for great tact and discretion. If such a believer remains adamant you will have to consider depriving him of his voting rights."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, November 21, 1968: Canadian Bahá'í News, Special Section, March 1973, p. 6)

Comments

Original Index: 130 | Current Position: 143

MAY 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "HOMOSEXUALITY, ACCORDING TO THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, IS SPIRITUALLY CONDEMNED...WE MUST STRUGGLE AGAINST THE EVILS IN SOCIETY BY SPIRITUAL MEANS, AND MEDICAL AND SOCIAL ONES AS WELL."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 21. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote a Canadian Bahá'í that "Homosexuality, according to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is spiritually condemned...We must struggle against the evils in society by spiritual means, and medical and social ones as well. We must be tolerant but uncompromising, understanding but immovable in our point of view."

21 May 1954

To an individual believer

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Your letter of April 19th has been received by the beloved Guardian, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He is very happy to have this opportunity of welcoming you personally into the service of our Faith; and hopes that, both in your professional career as a social worker, and in your life as a Bahá'í, you will be able to help many needy and troubled souls.

Amongst the many other evils afflicting society in this spiritual low water mark in history, is the question of immorality, and over-emphasis of sex. **Homosexuality, according to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is spiritually condemned.** This does not mean that people so afflicted must not be helped and advised and sympathized with. It does mean that we do not believe it is a permissible way of life; which, alas, is all too often the accepted attitude nowadays.

We must struggle against the evils in society by spiritual means, and medical and social ones as well. We must be tolerant but uncompromising, understanding but immovable in our point of view.

The thing people need to meet this type of trouble, as well as every other type, is greater spiritual understanding and stability; and of course we Bahá'ís believe that ultimately this can only be given to mankind through the Teachings of the Manifestation of God for this Day.

He will pray that you may be successful in your services to mankind as a Bahá'í.

With kind regards,

R. Rabbani

Assuring you of my loving prayers for your success and spiritual advancement,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

MAY 21. ON THIS DATE IN 1998, AN ARTICLE STATED "THE FAYETTEVILLE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION...DECIDED WEDNESDAY NOT TO ENDORSE A RACE UNITY DAY THAT IS SPONSORED BY THE LOCAL BAHA'I CONGREGATION...A BODY OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT COULD NOT OFFICIALLY SANCTION A RELIGIOUS EVENT."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 21. On this date in 1998, the *Fayetteville Observer-Times* (North Carolina) carried an article stating "The Fayetteville Human Relations Commission, a group whose mission is to improve race relations, decided Wednesday not to endorse a Race Unity Day that is sponsored by the local Baha'i congregation...The official reason the Human Relations Commission gave for declining to participate in the event was that a body of the city government could not officially sanction a religious event."

Group avoids Baha'i event: The Human Relations Commission declines to endorse Race Unity Day, and some members say the reason is prejudice Fayetteville Observer-Times

by Scott Travis and Laura Kinsler, staff writers

[See also editorial "Faith and Justice: If Baha'is weren't truly snubbed, they were insulted".]

The Fayetteville Human Relations Commission, a group whose mission is to improve race relations, decided Wednesday not to endorse a Race Unity Day that is sponsored by the local Baha'i congregation.

Members of the congregation attended a Human Relations Commission meeting in April to ask for the group's support for the June 14 event.

Fred Khavari, a Baha'i, said the Race Unity Day has been celebrated all over the world for more than 30 years. In the Baha'i Faith, all followers are equal in the eyes of God.

The unity of mankind, in both race and religion, has been something Baha'is have quietly promoted throughout their 150-year history. Baha'i is a Persian word that means "follower of the Glory of God."

Reason for declining

The official reason the Human Relations Commission gave for declining to participate in the event was that a body of the city government could not officially sanction a religious event. But some commission members said the real reason was simple prejudice.

"I'm detecting a sense of fear because we don't know who these people are or if their religion is legitimate," the Rev Floyd Johnson said. "If the Methodists or the Baptists came to us, would we be questioning this?"

Johnson said the commission should not use separation of church and state as an excuse for intolerance. He pointed out that the commission participated in the Martin Luther King Prayer Breakfast without officially endorsing religion.

Commission member Ann Groninger said she worried that the Baha'is were not being treated fairly. "I don't feel comfortable that they're not being treated the same as other religious groups, " she said.

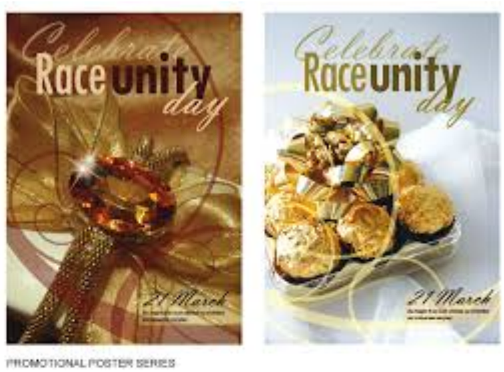
Lt. Col. Kathleen Seith, a commission member, said she didn't feel comfortable sanctioning the event because she had never heard of the Baha'i. "Does anyone know anything about them?" she asked. "I mean, they could be Satan worshipers."

Joyce Malone, another commission member, said, "Yes, I have a fear of this group. They've been here 20 years and they only have 12 members? And they're all white? I'll admit it, I am afraid."

Chairwoman Sandy Sweitzer said the size of the group is irrelevant. She pointed out that her own Quaker congregation has only 10 members. "This community is not tolerant of non-mainstream Christian religions," she said, "I am familiar with their religion. They are not some kind of cult, and they are not Satan worshipers."

Carolyn McKinley, chairman of the local spiritual assembly of Baha'is, said she is disappointed in the commission's response. "We went to the Human Relations Commission because we knew they tried to build cooperative efforts with different groups," she said. "Baha'i is becoming more widespread, but I understand there are people who have not heard of us." McKinley said the Race Unity Day picnic will go on as scheduled the afternoon of June 14 at Seabrook Park. It will run from 2 to 6 p.m.

[Comment: For the record, when I and a colleague presented our proposal to the Commission, we gave each member a nice, glossy introductory pamphlet, a copy of the "The Vision of Race Unity" by the NSA [National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States], and a fact sheet on the Fayetteville-Cumberland Co. Baha'is and on Race Unity Day. In the county, we have around 12 active members, one black & 2 part native American. In the city, there are around 20 enrolled members of various ethnic backgrounds... the city has just elected its first active LSA [Local Spiritual Assembly]. --Dr. Richard A McKinley]


Celebrate
Race unity
day
21 March
Celebrate
Race unity
day
21 March
PROMOTIONAL POSTER SERIES

Comments

Original Index: 133 | Current Position: 145

MAY 21. ON THIS DATE IN 2006, AN INDIVIDUAL WROTE THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE "ABOUT THE EXPULSION OF SCHOLAR SEN MCGLINN, FROM LEIDEN, IN THE NETHERLANDS, AND ABOUT THE BOYCOTT OF KALIMAT PRESS ON THE PART OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ’ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 21. On this date in 2006, an individual wrote the Universal House of Justice "about the expulsion of scholar Sen McGlinn, from Leiden, in the Netherlands, and about the boycott of Kalimat Press on the part of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States of America."

Letter from an individual to the Universal House of Justice, May 2006 Dear friends of the Universal House of Justice,

I have learned with shock and dismay about the expulsion of scholar Sen McGlinn, from Leiden, in the Netherlands, and about the boycott of Kalimat Press on the part of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States of America. [Note: McGlinn's name retained with permission; the complete, unedited letter is on McGlinn's own website. (-J.W., 2014)]

I am writing to you as the supreme authority of the Bahá’í Faith, in the hope that you might reconsider your decision, and induce the NSA of the United States to reverse theirs.

Both decisions involve the status and image of devoted believers and outstanding scholars who have dedicated their lives to studying and spreading the Bahá’í message. Both appear utterly at variance with the principle of independent search for truth, which was established by the Manifestation of God for this age, and with the Sacred Writings’ repeated urge to strive for excellence in learning as in all other human endeavours. Both have caused much suffering among sincere believers and may result in damage being done to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.

As was the case with the expulsions of ___ and ___, the motives for the disenrollment of Mr. McGlinn or the boycott of Kalimat Press were not clearly stated, either to the people involved or to their fellow believers. While, in conscience, I cannot abstain from again calling your attention to the fact that such fogginess raises serious issues of injustice, it is not with due process – or the lack thereof – that I am concerned with here.

What seriously worries me is the rather narrow conception of intellectual freedom in general, and scholarly research in particular, that Bahá í authorities have foisted upon Bahá'í men and women of learning.

That attitude is evidenced in a document issued on your behalf by the Department of the Secretariat on November 14 2005, and subsequently disseminated onto the Internet and onto official Bahá'í Bulletins such as Note Bahá'í in Italy. That paper does not mention Mr. McGlinn explicitly, but makes it easy to recognize him by quoting, out of their proper context, some sentences from the Foreword to his new book Church and State, self published in the Netherlands and distributed in the USA by Kalimat Press.

...

[lengthy discussion of Mr. McGlinn omitted]

...

Now, this leads to my second concern: the boycott against US-based publishing house Kalimat Press.

In October 2005 the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States instructed all Local Spiritual Assemblies and Bahá'í booksellers to gradually cease from keeping and selling titles handled by Kalimát Press. The NSA stated that some of its books "aside from those which have enriched Bahá'í literature over the years, contain matter inimical to the best interests of our Faith" and that "it is highly inappropriate for Bahá'í institutions, which are obligated to safeguard such interests, to provide channels of distribution for publishers promoting such titles".

Further explanation was sought for by Kalimat Press itself and by some concerned Bahá'í' authors. The NSA declined to go into any detail as to what the "inimical" works were, explaining they had no wish to draw a list of forbidden books.

Now, while one is relieved to hear that the Bahá'í Faith is not going to have an Index Librorum Prohibitorum such as established by the Catholic Inquisition, one cannot help wondering what the inimical titles may be, and why.

Since all the books published by Kalimat Press have passed Bahá'í Review, one must infer that the problems lie with the titles that Kalimat distributes. Among them one can't avoid to single out Mr. McGlinn's Church and State, professor Juan Cole's Modernity and the Millennium, Dr. William Garlington's The Bahá'í Faith in America: three outstanding, stimulating works that happen to apply, from different perspectives, the methods of contemporary western scholarship to the study of the Bahá'í Faith.

All three appear in Kalimat Press' series "Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í religions", that has significantly raised the standards of Bahá'í scholarship, and made Bahá'í studies an acceptable subject in academic circles worldwide. This in itself is no small accomplishment, and one our Beloved Guardian would have no doubt appreciated. Labelling any of these books "inimical to the best interests of the Faith" might not only result in damaging the cultural standards of the community as a whole; it might also put at risk the teaching of the message of the Blessed Beauty to prominent and well-educated people.

Shoghi Effendi was adamant that it was our duty as Bahá'ís to contact men and women of learning, distinction and responsibility:

"The more people of capacity who accept the Faith, the higher will become the standard of the entire group. (17 June 1942, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi) "As to teaching work in colleges and universities, this is very important, for students as a whole are open-minded and little influenced by tradition. They would easily enter the Cause if the subject is properly presented and their intellect and sentiments properly satisfied. This, however, should be attempted only by persons who have had university training and are therefore acquainted with the mind of the intelligent and educated youth". (3 February 1932 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, published in "Bahá'í News" 64 (July 1932), p. 4) It seems what we need now is a more profound and co-ordinated Bahá'í scholarship in order to attract such men as you are contacting. The world has–at least the thinking world–caught up by now with all the great and universal principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh over 70 years ago, and so of course it does not sound "new" to them. But we know that the deeper teachings, the capacity of His projected World Order to re-create society, are new and dynamic. It is these we must learn to present intelligently and enticingly to such men! (3 July 1949 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi)

The boycott of Kalimat Press will not go unnoticed in the academic circles of the United States. Nor will the expulsion of Sen McGlinn go unnoticed at Leiden University, where he works and where he'll soon be busy researching his Ph.D. dissertation. Middle East Studies is a relatively small field. Academic worlds interconnect, and news spreads fast.

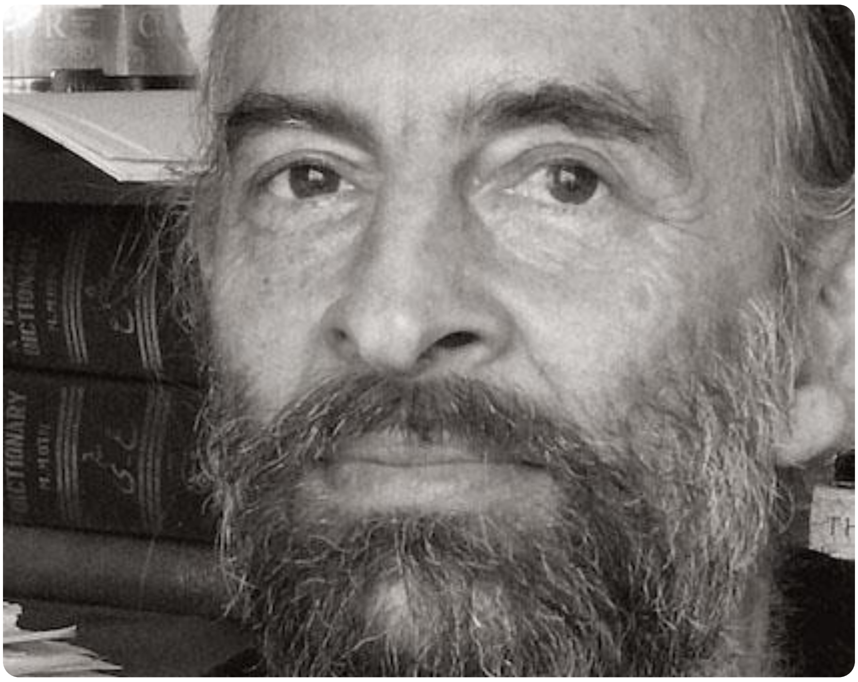
I wonder what the former Italian students of Professor Alessandro Bausani, now tenured professors themselves at the Universities of Rome or Naples, will have to say about those two cases, especially as they are currently being asked to petition the Italian Government in support of the right to higher education of Iranian Bahá'ís.

As an Italian Bahá'í, I find it depressing to think that the precious work of our open-minded, enlightened and devoted community, that has a leading role in many progressive activities (including inter-faith dialogue, development of integration policies for destitute immigrants, and of academic programmes for the enhancement of business ethics) should be put in jeopardy by the expulsion of an honest, devout scholar in the Netherlands, or by the boycott of a distinguished independent publishing house.

Since I am a professional journalist, I have sometimes been called to lend a hand in PR work in favour of our beleaguered sisters and brothers in Iran. It is my duty to warn the Universal House of Justice, may God enlighten and protect it, that academics, politicians and prominent journalists in Italy are unlikely to give their heartfelt support to an organization that expels scholars for doing (or publishing) scholarly research.

For all the above reasons, I beseech you to reconsider your decision to expel Dr McGlinn. Please, give him back the place in the Bahá'í community that is the right of "a receptive soul who hath in this Day inhaled the fragrance of His garment and hath, with a pure heart, set his face towards the all-glorious Horizon". Please, encourage the Bahá'ís around the world to benefit from reading, engaging, confronting his deep and honest intellectual efforts, as well as those of Kalimat Press, its owners, directors, and authors. Please, consult with the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and urge them to remove the ban on Kalimat Press that risks strangling a meritorious publishing house.

Best regards,



Comments

MAY 21. ON THIS DATE IN 2006, THE UHJ WROTE "THE BASIC PRINCIPLE IS THAT WHEN A BELIEVER PASSES AWAY, HIS PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE, AS WELL AS ITEMS SUCH AS NECESSARY FURNISHINGS AND TOOLS OF TRADE, REMAINS EXEMPT WHEN COMPUTING HOW MUCH, IF ANY, ḤUQÚQU'LLÁH REMAINS TO BE PAID ON HIS ESTATE."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 21. On this date in 2006, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The basic principle is that when a believer passes away, his principal residence, as well as items such as necessary furnishings and tools of trade, remains exempt when computing how much, if any, Ḥuqúqu'lláh remains to be paid on his estate."

The basic principle is that when a believer passes away, his principal residence, as well as items such as necessary furnishings and tools of trade, remains exempt when computing how much, if any, Ḥuqúqu'lláh remains to be paid on his estate.

Subject to the terms of the will, a beneficiary may well receive some or all of these items. Whether or not he is required to pay Huqúqu'lláh on these newly acquired assets will depend on the purpose for which he uses them. If they are used for purposes subject to exemption, such as his principal residence, necessary furnishings, or tools of trade, he would be exempt from paying Huqúqu'lláh on them. However, if he uses them for other purposes, such as converting them to cash, the exemption would not apply.

(21 May 2006, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)

Comments

Original Index: 136 | Current Position: 147

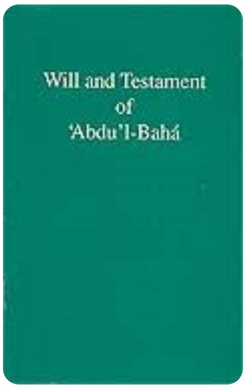
MAY 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1927, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THAT A "TRUE BELIEVER...MUST ACCEPT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS A SUPREME AND DIVINE MANIFESTATION AND 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ AS THE CHIEF INTERPRETER AND EXEMPLAR OF THOSE TEACHINGS. HE MUST ACCEPT EACH AND ALL OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE MASTER'S LAST WILL AND ..."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 22. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote that a "true believer...must accept Bahá'u'lláh as a supreme and divine Manifestation and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the chief Interpreter and Exemplar of those teachings. He must accept each and all of the provisions of the Master's last Will and Testament and must work with and accept the present administration of the Cause."

With regard to your first question, Shoghi Effendi wishes me to tell you that he has already written to America what for the present should be the qualifications of a true believer. He must accept Bahá'u'lláh as a supreme and divine Manifestation and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the chief Interpreter and Exemplar of those teachings. He must accept each and all of the provisions of the Master's last Will and Testament and must work with and accept the present administration of the Cause.

(22 May 1927, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)



Comments

> Original Index: 137 | Current Position: 148

MAY 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "AFTER THE WORLD GOES THROUGH ITS PRESENT TRAVAIL, SPIRITUAL VALUES WILL PREDOMINATE, AND THOSE YOUTH WHO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF BOTH MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION WILL BE THE TRUE LEADERS OF SOCIETY."

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submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 22. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi wrote "If they could be guided both materially and spiritually then it would be a great victory, because after the world goes through its present travail, spiritual values will predominate, and those youth who have the benefit of both material and spiritual education will be the true leaders of society."

2298.

Your niece's profession in training and educating children is one that will give her a rich reward, because she is aiding in the development of the characters of the youth of today, who will become the ones who will guide humanity tomorrow. If they could be guided both materially and spiritually then it would be a great victory, because after the world goes through its present travail, spiritual values will predominate, and those youth who have the benefit of both material and spiritual education will be the true leaders of society.

(22 May 1955 to an individual believer)

Comments

MAY 22. ON THIS DATE IN 1984, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF TAIWAN TO "BASE YOUR TRANSLATIONS ON CURRENT EDITIONS OF ALL THE BOOKS REFERRED TO, IF TRANSLATION IS INVOLVED. IN EACH INSTANCE YOU SHOULD CONSULT THE ORIGINAL PUBLISHER AND OBTAIN A COPY OF THE LATEST PRINTING OR EDITION TO ENSURE THAT ..."

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 22. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan, advising them to "base your translations on current editions of all the books referred to, if translation is involved. In each instance you should consult the original publisher and obtain a copy of the latest printing or edition to ensure that all approved corrections are embodied in your translation." Many Bahá'í books have had significant edits, deletions, and additions since their authors' deaths for various reasons, including failed prophecies.

371. Translators Should Utilize Most Recent Editions of Books

"The Universal House of Justice has requested us to advise you to base your translations on current editions of all the books referred to, if translation is involved. In each instance you should consult the original publisher and obtain a copy of the latest printing or edition to ensure that all approved corrections are embodied in your translation."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan, May 22, 1984)

George Townshend was an Irish Anglican clergyman who had renounced his orders to the Anglican Church in 1947, at the age of 70. Shoghi Effendi designated him a Hand of the Cause of God in 1951 and once said of George Townshend that he feels "Mr. Townshend's services to the Faith can best be rendered by his writing about it, as he obviously has an outstanding ability in this direction..." Of the books that Townshend wrote, *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh* is notable for the changes made from the original publication to subsequent editions published after the death of Shoghi Effendi. For example, a statement about the "first and present Guardian" has been removed and a section discussing "the lineage of succeeding Guardians" has been replaced with a section discussing "divinely guided institutions" in general.

John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

Comments

MAY 22 OR 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1844, THE BÁB DECLARED TO MULLÁ ḤUSAYN-I-BUSHRU'I HIS PERCEIVED FULFILLMENT OF SHAYKHI EXPECTATIONS. MULLÁ ḤUSAYN-I-BUSHRU'I ACCEPTED THE BÁB'S CLAIMS AND BECAME THE FIRST BÁBI.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 22 or 23. On this date in 1844, the Báb declared to Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i his perceived fulfillment of Shaykhi expectations. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i accepted the Báb's claims and became the first Bábi.

1542. The Declaration of the Bab and the Birthday of Abdu'l-Bahá

"...regarding the declaration of the Bab and the birthday of the Master: The Bab declared His Mission on the fourth day of the month of Jamadi I, two hours and eleven minutes after sunset, corresponding with the evening of May 22nd. But as the Bahá'í day begins after sunset, and not after midnight as in the West, the Bab's declaration is celebrated on the fifth day of Jamadi I, corresponding to the 23rd of May. Abdu'l-Bahá was born in the course of that same night, but the exact hour of His birth has not been ascertained."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, November 25, 1936)

Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would later play a key role in the Bábi uprisings. On March 20, 1848, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i visited the Báb at Maku prison, where the Báb was incarcerated. Under instructions from the Báb, Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i unfurled a Black Standard in Mashhad, fulfilling an Islamic prophecy, and began a march with other Bábis.

They were rebuffed at Barfurush and therefore made defensive fortifications at the Shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí. Mullá Ḥusayn-i-Bushru'i would die at the battle of Shaykh Tabarsí on February 2, 1849, but siege itself would last until May 10, 1849. The Báb was later executed on July 9, 1850. Bábi uprisings would continue elsewhere, notably in Zanjan and Nayriz.

Comments

Original Index: 141 | Current Position: 151

MAY 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1844, MÍRZÁ ḤUSAYN-'ALÍ NÚRÍ (LATER NAMED BAHÁ'U'LLÁH) AND HIS FIRST WIFE ÁSÍYIH KHÁNUM (LATER NAMED NAVVÁB OR ḤADRAT-I-VARAQIYIH-'ULYÁ) HAD THEIR FIRST CHILD, '‘ABBÁS (LATER NAMED 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ).

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 23. On this date in 1844, Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí Núrí (later named Bahá'u'lláh) and his first wife Ásíyih Khánum (later named Navváb or Ḥadrat-i-Varaqiyih-'Ulyá) had their first child, '‘Abbás (later named 'Abdu'l-Bahá).

Comments

MAY 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1943, MELBA KING CONVERTED TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, BECOMING THE FIRST FULL-BLOODED ESKIMO TO DO SO.

submitted4 months agobyA35821363

May 23. On this date in 1943, Melba King converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Albuquerque, New Mexico, becoming the first full-blooded Eskimo to do so.

On October 11, 1910, Melba King was born in the village of Savanaska in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. She converted to the Bahá'í Faith on May 23, 1943 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, becoming the first full-blooded Eskimo to do so.

On July 24, 1943, Shoghi Effendi wrote Melba King, the first Eskimo to become a Bahá'í, "Abdul-Baha was most anxious that the Eskimo people should be taught the Message of this New Day, and it is a source of happiness to all Bahá'ís that you, a member of that race, have arisen to spread these teachings."

(5) July 24th, 1943

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

The Guardian was very happy to receive your letter of May 29th; and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

It is with great joy that he welcomes you into the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and he hopes that you will be the means of attracting many other souls to this glorious life-giving Message.

Abdul-Baha was most anxious that the Eskimo people should be taught the Message of this New Day, and it is a source of happiness to all Bahá'ís that you, a member of that race, have arisen to spread these teachings. **+E4** God has surely guided your steps and blessed your search for divine Truth.

If people only realized it, the inner life of the spirit is that which counts, but they are so blinded by desires and so misled that they have brought upon themselves all the suffering we see at present in the world. The Bahá'ís seek to lead people back to a knowledge of their true selves and the purpose for which they were created, and thus to their greatest happiness and highest good.

You may be sure the Guardian will pray that you may render the Cause many valuable services and become a gifted and confirmed Bahá'í teacher.

With warm Bahá'í love,

R. Rabbani

P.S. It will interest you to know that there are now Bahá'ís active in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the Eskimo village of Tuluksak, Alaska.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

Your most welcome letter has rejoiced my heart. I extend to you a most hearty welcome into the ranks of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, and will greatly value your support and cooperation. Your conversion to His Cause is indeed a historic event, and will greatly rejoice the hearts of the believers. I will pray for your success and spiritual advancement from the depths of my heart. Rest assured and be confident.

Your true brother,

Shoghi

(5) 5. Melba M. Call (King)

+E4 4. (Letter No. 5) Melba Call (King) was the first Eskimo to become a Bahá'í. While she was born and raised in Alaska, she was residing in New Mexico when she heard of the Faith and became a Bahá'í.

Comments

MAY 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1985, THE UHJ WROTE THE NSA OF NORWAY, "THE PRESCRIBED VERSE 'WE WILL ALL, VERILY, ABIDE BY THE WILL OF GOD'... THUS IF A BAHÁ'Í IS MARRYING A NON-BAHÁ'Í AND THIS PERSON FOR ANY REASON REFUSES TO UTTER THIS VERSE, THEN THE BAHÁ'Í CANNOT MARRY THAT PERSON."

May 23. On this date in 1985, the Universal House of Justice wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway, the prescribed verse 'We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God'... Thus if a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í and this person for any reason refuses to utter this verse, then the Bahá'í cannot marry that person."

1284. In Reality No Individual Performs the Marriage Ceremony and if for Any Reason Non-Bahá'í Refuses to Recite Verse, Bahá'í Cannot Marry that Person

"When a Bahá'í marriage ceremony takes place, there is no individual, strictly speaking, who 'performs' it--no Bahá'í equivalent to a minister of the Church. The couple themselves perform the ceremony by each saying, in the presence of at least two witnesses, **the prescribed verse 'We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God.'** This ceremony is performed under the authority of a Spiritual Assembly which has the responsibility for ensuring that the various requirements of Bahá'í law, such as obtaining the consent of the parents, are met, to whom the witnesses must be acceptable, and which issues the marriage certificate.

"The sincerity with which the sacred verse is spoken is a matter for the consciences of those who utter it. **According to the explicit text of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, both the bride and groom must, in the presence of witnesses, recite the prescribed verse; this is an essential requirement of the marriage ceremony. Thus if a Bahá'í is marrying a non-Bahá'í and this person for any reason refuses to utter this verse, then the Bahá'í cannot marry that person."**

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Norway, May 23, 1985)

Comments

MAY 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1979, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE SENT A MESSAGE TO ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES ASKING FOR "SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE FAITH AND THE BELIEVERS IN IRAN."

May 23. On this date in 1979, the Universal House of Justice sent a message to all National Spiritual Assemblies asking for "special prayers for the protection of the Faith and the believers in Iran."

The Universal House of Justice

23 May 1979

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Since you were last informed of the recent events in the Cradle of the Faith, news has been received of further persecutions directed against the beloved and steadfast friends.

Historic sites of the Faith, Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of local communities, and other Bahá'í properties in several provinces of Iran have been seized and occupied by forces of the new revolutionary government. Among the more sacred of these properties are the Most Holy House of the Báb in Shiraz, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh to be a place of pilgrimage for His followers and regarded by them as the most hallowed Spot in that land, the Síyáh-Chál and two ancestral Houses of Bahá'u'lláh in Tehran and Tákur. Ominous signs of the intensification of active repression of the Faith are becoming evident, and the defenseless and vulnerable Persian Bahá'í community faces mounting perils to its Holy Places, institutions, properties and even the lives of its members.

We call on all believers in every land to offer special prayers for the protection of the Faith and the believers in Iran on the forthcoming anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, on 9 July 1979, supplicating that through God's loving grace this fresh wave of persecution may not seriously harm the interests of His Cause, and that He may remove the obstacles from the path of the friends, and provide the means for the protection of the Holy Places and institutions of His Faith.

As soon as the Secretariat of your Assembly receives this letter, immediate steps should be taken to inform all the friends under your jurisdiction of the contents of the letter so that as many believers as possible in every land may participate in this day of prayer on behalf of their beleaguered brethren in Iran.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

MAY 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, THE BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SUBMITTED "PROPOSALS TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR CHARTER REVISION" TO THE U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD, NOTING "THE BAHÁ'Í CONCEPT OF WORLD ORDER...A WORLD SUPER-STATE ...AN INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE ..."

May 23. On this date in 1955, the Bahá'í International Community submitted "Proposals to the United Nations for Charter Revision" to the U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, noting "The Bahá'í concept of world order...A world Super-State ...an International Executive ... a World Parliament ...a Supreme Tribunal."

Proposals to the United Nations for Charter Revision by Bahá'í International Community New York: 1955-05-23 Jump to a specific proposal: I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld Secretary-General United Nations New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

The Bahá'í International Community, in its capacity of an international nongovernmental organization, submits recommendations for revision of the Charter of United Nations and the Statute of the International Court of Justice.

These recommendations constitute the considered views of the twelve* National Bahá'í Assemblies representing the Bahá'ís of Irán, India, Pákistan and Burma, Australia and New Zealand, 'Iráq, Egypt and Sudán, Germany and Austria, Italy and Switzerland, the British Isles, Canada, Central America, South America and the United States. Their participation unites a wide diversity of national, racial and religious backgrounds in one common concept of the structure needed to establish justice and peace.

In submitting its recommendations the Bahá'í International Community is concerned with the desperate condition into which the nations and peoples of the world have fallen. The seeds of destruction are sown within as well as without the present membership of United Nations. No minor and legalistic adjustment of the Charter, the Bahá'ís are convinced, can restore the supremacy of moral law in the conduct of human affairs nor seize control of events from the chaos which engulfs mankind. The Bahá'ís appeal to every enlightened and responsible statesman associated with United Nations to grasp, before it is too late, this providential opportunity to create a political organism commensurate with the new and unprecedented character of the world in our time.

The Bahá'í recommendations are based upon three apparent truths: that real sovereignty is no longer vested in the institutions of the national state because the nations have become interdependent; that the existing crisis is moral and spiritual as well as political; and that the existing crisis can only be surmounted by the achievement of a world order representative of the peoples as well as the nations of mankind.

The Bahá'í concept of world order is defined in these terms: A world Super-State in whose favor all the nations of the world will have ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. This State will have to include an International Executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on very recalcitrant member of the Commonwealth; a World Parliament whose members are elected by the peoples in their respective countries and whose election is confirmed by their respective governments: a Supreme Tribunal whose judgment has a binding effect even in cases where the parties concerned have not voluntarily agreed to submit their case to its consideration.

Since action by peoples as well as governments is essential, the Bahá'í recommendations include the proposal that consideration of revision by United Nations be accompanied by wide dissemination of the principles of international relations and the calling of peoples? conventions to register the general will.

Impossible as the achievement of world order may appear to traditionalist or partisan, mankind is passing through a crucial stage likened to that of an individual entering maturity and using new powers and faculties beyond the grasp of irresponsible youth. Unassailable is the position that any lesser international body represents a compromise with the forces of disaster and destruction.

In support of its thesis the Bahá'í International Community presents with this letter an annex citing references to the subject in Bahá'í writings, and an annex proposing specific revisions.

Sincerely,

Bahá'í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Bahá'í PROPOSALS TO THE UNITED NATIONS FOR CHARTER REVISION

THE experiences of the last decade have demonstrated the need for certain fundamental changes in the charter of the United Nations if that organization is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war..., reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; to promote social progress and better standards of living in larger freedom."

In order to insure the realization of the principles proclaimed in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, that organization must be given real authority and military power to maintain Peace and uphold international Justice; it must operate in accordance with the principle of equality of nations large and small; it must become the guarantor of human rights, faith in which was so eloquently proclaimed in the Preamble.

The authors of the Charter foresaw a time when its terms would nee revision and provided, in articles 108 and 109, for changes and revisions. In this connection, the Bahá'í International Community submits, in addition to its statement of principle, a number of specific and general suggestions listed below.

I. Membership in the United Nations being an indispensable condition for the preservation of international peace, no nation should be allowed to leave the organization. It is therefore proposed that Article 6 of the Charter be amended to read:

A member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present Charter may be subjected by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Security Council, to economic and other sanctions, and, in extreme cases, may be compelled by force to abide by the principles of the Charter. II. In order to give the General Assembly more freedom of discussion, it is suggested that Article 12 of the Charter and all references to it which occur in any other Article (such as Articles 10, 11, 35, etc.) be eliminated.

III. It is suggested that membership in the General Assembly be apportioned according to some form of proportionate representation and Paragraph 1, of Article 18 of the Charter, be amended accordingly.

IV. The Principle of the equality of nations large and small, proclaimed in the Preamble, must not be disregarded or contradicted in any article of the Charter. Therefore, it is suggested that Article 23 be changed to read:

1. The Security Council shall consist of eleven Members of the United Nations elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years, no retiring member being eligible for immediate reelection.
2. Each member of the Security Council shall have one representative. All reference to permanent members of the Security Council found in any of the articles of the Charter to be eliminated.

V. In conformity with Article 23 (as revised), Paragraph 2 of Article 27 shall read:

Decisions of the Security Council shall be made by an affirmative vote of seven members; provided that in decisions made under Charter VI [Ed. - Chapter VI?], and under Paragraph 3 Article 52, a party to the dispute shall abstain from voting. Paragraph 3 of Article 27 to be eliminated.

VI. The maintenance of peace being a task incumbent upon all members of the United Nations, it is proposed that the first sentence of Paragraph 2, Article 47, be amended to read:

The Military Staff Committee shall consist of the Chiefs of Staff of the members of the Security Council or their representatives. VII. In the interest of justice, it is proposed that Article 50 be amended to read:

If preventive or enforcement measures against any state are taken by the Security Council, any other state, whether a member of the United Nations or not, which finds itself confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of those measures, shall have the right to ask the Security Council for a solution of its problems. VIII. Having been written and adopted during the course of the Second World War, the United Nations Charter at times reflects the feelings and conditions which prevailed then and which do not exist any longer. It is inappropriate to perpetuate the use of the term enemy in relation to certain states must inevitably cooperate in the establishment and the maintenance of world peace. It is suggested that Paragraph 2 of Article 53, as well as references to "enemy states" in any other article of the Charter, be eliminated.

IX. In the interests of Justice, which is the only principle upon which the edifice of durable peace can be raised, it is proposed that the International Court of Justice be given compulsory jurisdiction in all legal disputes between states and Article 35 of the "Statute of the International Court of Justice" be amended to read:

1. The jurisdiction of the Court comprises all cases and all matters especially provided for in the Charter of the United Nations or in treaties and conventions in force.
2. The states parties to the present Statute declare that they recognizes compulsory ipso facto and without special agreement, the jurisdiction of the Court in all legal disputes concerning: a. the interpretation of a treaty; b. any questions of international law; c. the existence of any fact which, if established, would constitute a breach of an international obligation d. the nature or extend of the reparation to be made for the breach of an international obligation;
3. In the event of a dispute as to whether the Court has jurisdiction, the matter shall be settled by the decision of the Court. X. It is recommended that United Nations adopt a Bill of Rights, which guarantees to every individual freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, and of thought, as well as freedom from racial and religious discrimination, freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, equality of sexes, equality before law, equality of opportunity, and other basic human rights. The individual human being is a spiritual as well as a physical creation and the purpose of society is to provide for the evolution of spiritual qualities in a framework of unity sustained by law.

Comments

MAY 23. ON THIS DATE IN 1991, THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT WROTE A MEMORANDUM INDIVIDUAL IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON A NUMBER OF TOPICS, INCLUDING THE CAPITALIZATION OF PRONOUNS IN BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE AND 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S REFERENCE TO "WE MUSLIMS".

May 23. On this date in 1991, the Research Department wrote a memorandum in response to questions on a number of topics, including the capitalization of pronouns in Bahá'í literature and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reference to "we Muslims".

Secret of Divine Civilization Translation, Capital Punishment, and Other Questions by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1991-06-20 Department of the Secretariat 20 June 1991 Mr. ...

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice referred to the Research Department your letter of 17 April 1991 in which you asked for guidance in the matter of capitalization of pronouns referring to Abdu'l-Baha, and other questions that came to your attention while you were working on the translation into Portuguese of "The Secret of Divine Civilization".

We are now able to send you the enclosed copy of the memorandum dated 23 May 1991, and its two attachments, prepared in response.

The House of Justice commends you on the valuable contribution you have made to the range of Bahá'í literature in Portuguese and wishes you well in your continuing efforts in this important field of service to the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings, For Department of the Secretariat Enclosure (with two attachments)

MEMORANDUM To: The Universal House of Justice Date: 23 May 1991 From: The Research Department "THE SECRET OF DIVINE CIVILIZATION" The Research Department has studied the questions raised by Mr. ... in his letter of 17 April 1991 to the Universal House of Justice. Mr. ... is engaged in translating "The Secret of Divine

Civilization" into Portuguese. Many of the questions he poses in his letter result from a close study of this book. We provide the following response.

1. Capitalization of Pronouns

Mr. ... lists a number of places in "The Secret of Divine Civilization" where the pronouns that refer to 'Abdu'l-Bahá are capitalized. Mr. ... indicates that he is aware that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was known as the Master during the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh and he enquires whether His station, at that time, was "already so special that He should refer to Himself with [a] capital letter"?

In contrast to many European languages, in Persian, personal pronouns are never capitalized. 'Abdu'l-Bahá followed this established rule and did not capitalize the pronouns that refer to Him. When the book was translated into English, the particular translator employed the convention, common in English, of capitalizing pronouns. It is interesting to note that when 'Abdu'l-Bahá signed His name in English, He used a combination of upper and lower case letters. He, typically, wrote "abdul Baha abbas" — the reference to Bahá'u'lláh being the only word He capitalized.

On the same principle it is the policy of the Universal House of Justice when approving translations of Tablets written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, generally to have "me" and "my" and "mine" in lower case, following the example given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the writing of His own name in Roman letters. Pronouns used in referring to 'Abdu'l-Bahá by someone else, however, are normally capitalized. This policy can be seen in "Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1982).

With regard to English usage, Shoghi Effendi endorsed the capitalization of all pronouns referring to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as a mark of respect for the Stations of the Central Figures of the Faith. A letter dated 22 November 1949 written on his behalf states:

In regard to your question about capitalizing the pronouns: the Guardian realizes this looks a little strange to non-Bahá'ís, but he feels we, being believers, and having the full sense of the Stations of the Central Figures of our Faith, should do this as a sign of respect under all circumstances. It can, nevertheless, be noticed in the Guardian's translations of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets and Prayers, that sometimes he capitalizes "Me" and "My" and sometimes not, depending upon the context in which Bahá'u'lláh was referring to Himself; in humility towards God or in majesty towards mankind. As to translations of the Bahá'í Writings and literature written by Bahá'ís in other languages, Shoghi Effendi in letters written on his behalf, extracts from which are cited below, stressed the importance of conforming to the rules of the particular language:

It is not necessary to use capital letters, as we do in English, for the personal pronouns of the Master, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, as long as there is no comparable usage of them in Norwegian. The same applies to the word Bahá'í. We do not try to introduce new forms into a language, but in English the precedent exists in the Bible and in good usage. (24 August 1949 to an individual believer) He is interested in accomplishing two things — he would like in the European languages to have as much uniformity with the English translations as possible; he does not wish the Bahá'í translations to be in any way a flagrant violation of the rules of the language into which our literature is being translated. Your Committee must conscientiously study this question, and then do the best you can to have the Bahá'í literature in French meet the high standards of the French language and grammar.

If the possessive and demonstrative adjectives and pronouns in French are never capitalized where they stand for "God", then this should not be done in the Bahá'í literature. If there is a precedent for doing so in the French language, however, they should be. The same is true of the attributes of God.

(15 February 1957 to the French National Translation and Publication Committee)

1. Reference to "we (i.e., Muslims)", p. 43 Mr. ... enquires whether the insertion of the parenthetic term "(i.e., Muslims)" could convey the idea that 'Abdu'l-Bahá considered Himself a Muslim or rather, if, in this sentence, the Master might be referring to the Persian people. The parenthetic insertion does not occur in the original Persian text. It has been added by the translator. The Research Department has not been able to locate any authorized interpretation of this particular passage. From a study of the context, however, it appears that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is comparing the energetic activities of the Protestants in raising up the "Word of God" and in increasing "the number of believers" with the failure and inactivity of the "Muslim religious authorities". The "we", in this case, might well be a reference to such Muslims as have failed in their duty as defenders of their faith.

It is also useful to consider that "The Secret of Divine Civilization" was addressed to a non-Bahá'í audience at a time when modernization and reform were important contemporary issues in Iran. The book was first published anonymously. It is, therefore, suggested that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's use of "we" and "us" throughout the text might well have intended to communicate the fact that He was writing as a concerned citizen who was offering constructive ideas pertinent to the ultimate well-being of His native land.

1. Identity of "the ruler", p. 61

As to the identity of "the ruler who is fostering peace and tranquillity and at the same time devoting more energy than warmongers to the accumulation of weapons ... on the grounds that peace and harmony can only be brought about by force", the Research Department has not, to date, been able to identify this ruler. It is interesting to note that, when the Persian text of this passage is studied, it could also be read in such a way as to represent a generalization about rulers who engage in this type of hypocritical behaviour, rather than necessarily specifying a particular contemporary "ruler". An earlier English translation, published in 1918 under the title of "Mysterious Forces of Civilization" reflected the more general sense. A photocopy of the page is attached [see below]. With regard to this translation, please note that the inverted commas around part of the text are not found in the original text.

It is the view of the Research Department that, if the Master intended a particular "ruler", it will be difficult to identify him since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's description could well have applied to most of the kings who were addressed, individually, by Bahá'u'lláh. One possible candidate could be Napoleon III, who was characterized by Shoghi Effendi in "The Promised Day Is Come" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 49-50, as "the most outstanding monarch of his day in the West". As such, Napoleon would, no doubt, have also been well known in the East. However, in the absence of an authoritative text, this suggestion remains in the realm of speculation.

1. Bahá'í View of Capital Punishment, p. 100

Mr. ... enquires about the Bahá'í position on the death penalty. We provide for Mr. ...'s study, passages from the Writings and letters of the Universal House of Justice, from which a number of relevant principles can be drawn. For example:

The community has the right to defend and protect its rights, but not to seek revenge, by the imposition of a legal punishment (extract 1). The power of the divine Revelation to transform human behaviour is a powerful means of preventing crime (extracts 1 and 3).

While the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas" invokes capital punishment, it also provides for the alternative penalty of life imprisonment (extracts, 2, 3, and 4).

The punishments for murder and arson mentioned in "A Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book of Bahá'u'lláh" (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1973), are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice (extracts 3 and 4).

Capital punishment could be prescribed for wilful murder and arson depending on the degree of the offence and extenuating circumstances (extracts 3 and 4).

1. "... a second volume", p. 106 With regard to the "second volume" anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in which He would further elucidate important "subjects which today are neglected", the Master did not write "a second volume" addressed to the people of Persia. He did, however, write "A Treatise on Statesmanship" in 1893. This work which, to date, has not been translated into English, is addressed to the Bahá'í community of Persia.
2. Works of 'Abdu'l-Baha Revealed during the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh

Mr. ... notes two examples of works revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the life-time of Bahá'u'lláh — the Tablet concerning the Tradition of the "Hidden Treasure" and "The Secret of Divine Civilization" — and he poses a number of questions. He asks whether "The Secret of Divine Civilization" was revealed at the request of Bahá'u'lláh, whether other works were written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during this time period and, if so, whether they have been translated into English. He also enquires whether it would be correct to say that during Bahá'u'lláh's ministry, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would only write a book or a Tablet at the request of His Father.

In a Tablet, quoted in Persian in the book "The Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Langenhain: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1986), p. 42, by Muhammad-'Alí Faizi, Bahá'u'lláh explains the circumstances under which "The Secret of Divine Civilization" came to be revealed. He states that one day, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in His presence, He asked the Greatest Branch ('Abdu'l-Bahá) to write a number of pages on the causes of the world's destruction and of its prosperity and salvation, as a means both of reducing the resistance of those who were inflexibly opposed to change and of preparing them to listen to the Call of God.

The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are the fruit of over fifty years of prolific labour, from His early twenties to the end of His life. They consist of personal correspondence, general Tablets, Tablets on specific themes, books, prayers, poems, public talks, and recorded conversations. (See the article, "The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" by Amin Banani in "The Bahá'í World", vol. XV (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1976) for additional information). One other major work which was written during the life-time of Bahá'u'lláh, which has been translated into English, is "A Travellers Narrative" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980). This book, written around 1886, was published anonymously. It is a history of the episode of the Báb. It presents a brief and dispassionate account of that portentous Dispensation in a simple and moving narrative.

With regard to whether 'Abdu'l-Bahá only wrote at the instruction of His Father; while in certain instances Bahá'u'lláh specifically instructed 'Abdu'l-Bahá to write on designated topics, it would not be accurate to say that 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote only at Bahá'u'lláh's explicit bidding. It is useful to consider Shoghi Effendi's descriptions of the degree of rapport and unity of purpose that existed between Bahá'u'lláh and His Son. For example, in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), pp. 325-326, he states that Bahá'u'lláh's "purpose" had been "thoroughly infused into the mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" and that "His Spirit" had "profoundly" permeated "His being". And, in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", Shoghi Effendi writes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá "gets His light, His inspiration and sustenance direct from the Fountainhead of the Bahá'í Revelation" and that "He reflects even as a clear and perfect Mirror the rays of Bahá’u’lláh's glory". Based on the foregoing, it is inconceivable that, in the absence of any specific instructions from His Father, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's actions could have, in any way, run counter to Bahá'u'lláh's will and purpose.

1. The First Person to Recognize Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God

Mr. ... refers to several sources in the literature of the Bahá'í Faith where the first person to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God is identified. Those named include 'Abdu'l-Bahá (see Balyuzi's book "'Abdu'l-Bahá The Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh" (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987), p. 13), Mírzá Áqá Ján and Shaykh Hasán-i-Zunúzi (see "Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory" (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980, p. 109 and pp. 67-68). He asks how this apparent contradiction is to be resolved.

It is evident that the term "the first" to recognize Bahá'u'lláh had different meanings according to the context of its use. For example, given 'Abdu'l-Bahá's designation as "the Mystery of God" and His unique relationship with His Father, it is possible that the reference is to the spiritual realm, a realm which transcends time. While, in the case of Mírzá Áqá Ján and Shaykh Hasán-i-Zunúzi, the application of the term is necessarily in the context of the human plane of existence.

In relation to Mírzá Áqá Ján, Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By", p. 115, clearly affirms that Mírzá Áqá Ján was "the first to believe" in Bahá'u'lláh, and that to him, Bahá'u'lláh, more than to anyone else, was moved to disclose, at this critical juncture, a glimpse of the as yet unrevealed glory of His station.

Hence, one possible distinction between Mírzá Áqá Ján and Shaykh Hasán-i-Zunúzi could well relate to the degree or extent of their recognition, with primacy being accorded to Mírzá Áqá Ján.

1. Designer of the House of Worship in 'Ishqabad

Mr. ... refers to statements concerning the designer of the House of Worship in 'Ishqabad, which are contained in "The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh", vol. 4, p. 122, by Mr. Taherzadeh and in Mr. Balyuzi's "'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant", pp. 109-110. In the former, mention is made of the fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá conceived a plan for a nine-sided building and that the main features of the design were prepared by Ustad 'All-Akbar-i-Banna, while in the second book, the general design is attributed to the Master. Mr. ... enquires whether both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Ustad 'Ali-Akbar-i-Banna can be described as the authors of the general design of this House of Worship.

'Abdu'l-Bahá defined the essential architectural character of the Bahá'í House of Worship as consisting of a nine-sided, circular building. All Houses of Worship, therefore, incorporate these design features and the Master's instructions guide the architects in the preparation of their unique, individual designs. The design of the first 'Ishqábád Temple, prepared by Ustád 'Ali-Akbar-i-Banná, was likewise influenced and inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's archetypal design. Shoghi Effendi, in "God Passes By", p. 300, refers to the Master's intense personal interest in the construction of the 'Ishqábád House of Worship. He affirms that it was "fostered by Him at every stage in its development".

[Attachments 2]

Learn About Islam

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 24, 1892, MILDRED EILEEN CLARK WAS BORN IN MANCHESTER, ILLINOIS. SHE WOULD LATER BE NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS.

May 24. On this date in 1892, Mildred Eileen Clark was born in Manchester, Illinois. She would later be named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands.

Born in Manchester, Illinois, on May 24, 1892, Mildred Clark chose pioneering as her field of service from the earliest days of her conversion to the Bahá'í Faith.

In the first Seven Year Plan (1937-1944) assigned to the United States she pioneered to Denver, Colorado, and there married George Clark. In 1946, at the inception of the second Seven Year Plan (1946-1953), she offered to go to Europe and was requested by the European Teaching Committee to settle in Norway where, in 1948, she assisted in the formation of the first Spiritual Assembly of Oslo.

In January 1950, she pioneered to the Netherlands and in 1952 she was asked to go to Luxembourg to assist in making the necessary arrangements for the European Teaching Conference held there in September 1952. Following this she returned to Oslo and actively resumed her service there.

While attending the European Intercontinental Teaching Conference held in Stockholm in July 1953, Mildred Clark volunteered to serve in Svolvaer, Lofoten Islands. She was one of the first to arise in the Ten Year Crusade, arriving at her post in August 1953. For this service she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi. She remained at this distant post for more then ten years, later returning to Norway. When the need for pioneers became apparent in Finland, she moved to that country, her final pioneering goal.

On May 27, 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark died in Turku, Finland.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Great Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1901, THE NAME OF THE CHICAGO BOARD OF COUNCIL WAS CHANGED TO THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

May 24. On this date in 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12.

On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandarání of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for

all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

(30 November 1930)

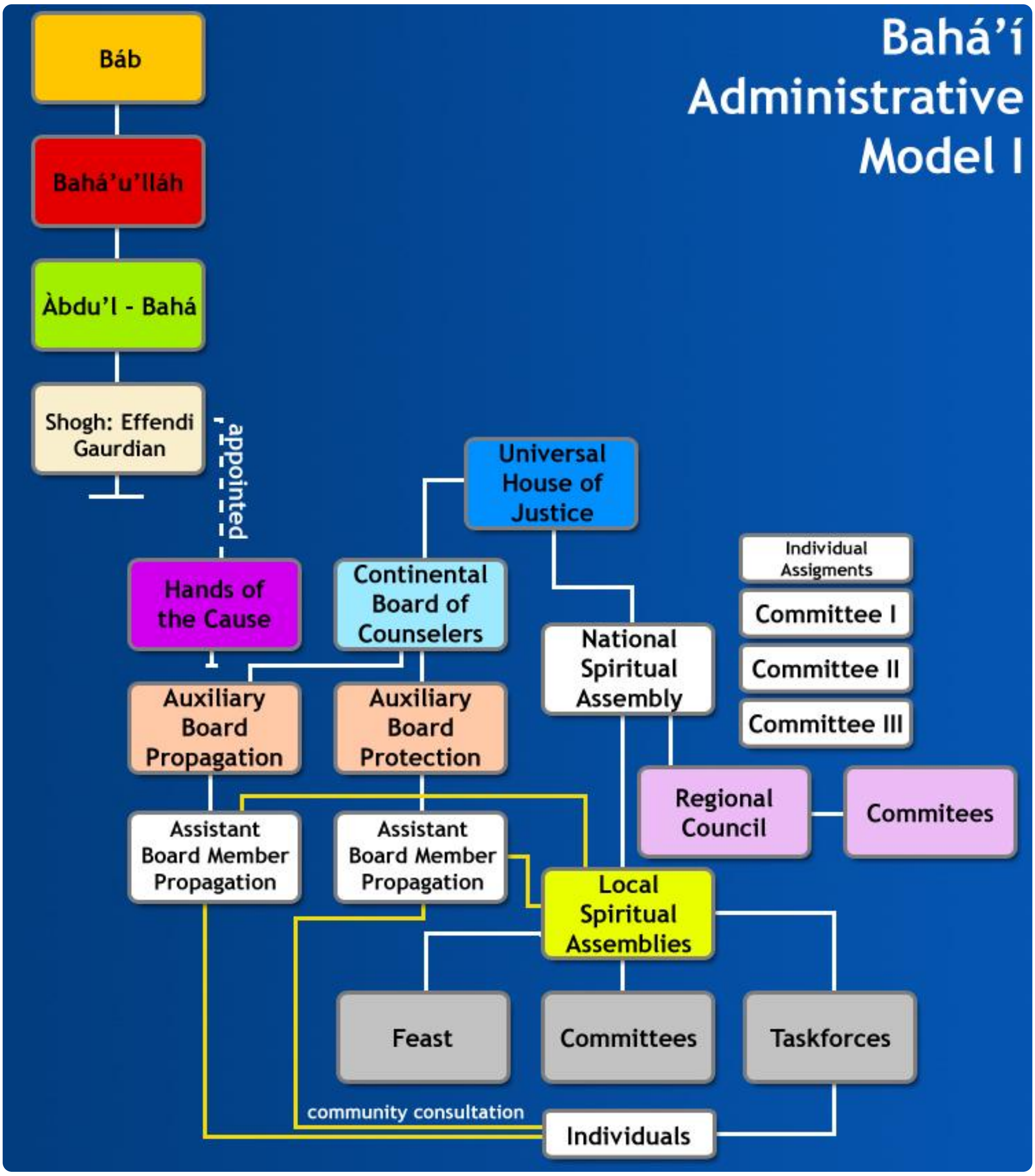
On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.

"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.


Bahá'í Administrative Model I
Báb
Bahá'u'lláh
Àbdu'l - Bahá
Shogh: Effendi Gaurdian
appointed
Universal House of Justice
Hands of the Cause
Continental Board of Counselers
Individual Assigments
Committee I
Committee II
Committee III
National Spiritual Assembly
Auxiliary Board Propagation
Auxiliary Board Protection
Regional Council
Commitees
Assistant Board Member Propagation
Assistant Board Member Propagation
Local Spiritual Assemblies
Feast
Committees
Taskforces
community consultation
Individuals

Comments

MAY 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1912, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ GAVE A TALK AT THE FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION AT THE UNITARIAN CONFERENCE IN BOSTON, WHERE HE STATED "THE ESSENTIAL REALITIES, WHICH THE PROPHETS LABORED SO HARD TO ESTABLISH IN HUMAN HEARTS AND MINDS WHILE UNDERGOING ORDEALS AND SUFFERING TORTURES ..."

May 24. On this date in 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a talk at the Free Religious Association at the Unitarian Conference in Boston, where he stated "The essential realities, which the Prophets labored so hard to establish in human hearts and minds while undergoing ordeals and suffering tortures of persecution, have now well nigh vanished."

Talk given 24 May 1912 Talk at Free Religious Association, or Unitarian Conference

Boston, Massachusetts

From Stenographic Notes

Creation is the expression of motion. Motion is life. A moving object is a living object, whereas that which is motionless and inert is as dead. All created forms are progressive in their planes, or kingdoms of existence, under the stimulus of the power or spirit of life. The universal energy is dynamic. Nothing is stationary in the material world of outer phenomena or in the inner world of intellect and consciousness.

Religion is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore, it must be living, vitalized, moving and progressive. If it be without motion and nonprogressive, it is without the divine life; it is dead. The divine institutes are continuously active and evolutionary; therefore, the revelation of them must be progressive and continuous. All things are subject to reformation. This is a century of life and renewal. Sciences and arts, industry and invention have been reformed. Law and ethics have been reconstituted, reorganized. The world of thought has been regenerated. Sciences of former ages and philosophies of the past are useless today. Present exigencies demand new methods of solution; world problems are without precedent. Old ideas and modes of thought are fast becoming obsolete. Ancient laws and archaic ethical systems will not meet the requirements of modern conditions, for this is clearly the century of a new life, the century of the revelation of reality and, therefore, the greatest of all centuries. Consider how the scientific developments of fifty years have surpassed and eclipsed the knowledge and achievements of all the former ages combined. Would the announcements and theories of ancient astronomers explain our present knowledge of the suns and planetary systems? Would the mask of obscurity which beclouded medieval centuries meet the demand for clear-eyed vision and understanding which characterizes the world today? Will the despotism of former governments answer the call for freedom which has risen from the heart of humanity in this cycle of illumination? It is evident that no vital results are now forthcoming from the customs, institutions and standpoints of the past. In view of this, shall blind imitations of ancestral forms and theological interpretations continue to guide and control the religious life and spiritual development of humanity today? Shall man, gifted with the power of reason, unthinkingly follow and adhere to dogma, creeds and hereditary beliefs which will not bear the analysis of reason in this century of effulgent reality? Unquestionably this will not satisfy men of science, for when they find premise or conclusion contrary to present standards of proof and without real foundation, they reject that which has been formerly accepted as standard and correct and move forward from new foundations.

The divine Prophets have revealed and founded religion. They have laid down certain laws and heavenly principles for the guidance of mankind. They have taught and promulgated the knowledge of God, established praiseworthy ethical ideals and inculcated the highest standards of virtues in the human world. Gradually these heavenly teachings and foundations of reality have been beclouded by human interpretations and dogmatic imitations of ancestral beliefs. The essential realities, which the Prophets labored so hard to establish in human hearts and minds while undergoing ordeals and suffering tortures of persecution, have now well nigh vanished. Some of these heavenly Messengers have been killed, some imprisoned, all of Them despised and rejected while proclaiming the reality of Divinity. Soon after Their departure from this world, the essential truth of Their teachings was lost sight of and dogmatic imitations adhered to.

Inasmuch as human interpretations and blind imitations differ widely, religious strife and disagreement have arisen among mankind, the light of true religion has been extinguished and the unity of the world of humanity destroyed. The Prophets of God voiced the spirit of unity and agreement. They have been the Founders of divine reality. Therefore, if the nations of the world forsake imitations and investigate the reality underlying the revealed Word of God, they will agree and become reconciled. For reality is one and not multiple.

The nations and religions are steeped in blind and bigoted imitations. A man is a Jew because his father was a Jew. The Muslim follows implicitly the footsteps of his ancestors in belief and observance. The Buddhist is true to his heredity as a Buddhist. That is to say, they profess religious belief blindly and without investigation, making unity and agreement impossible. It is evident, therefore, that this condition will not be remedied without a reformation in the world of religion. In other words, the fundamental reality of the divine religions must be renewed, reformed, revoiced to mankind.

From the seed of reality religion has grown into a tree which has put forth leaves and branches, blossoms and fruit. After a time this tree has fallen into a condition of decay. The leaves and blossoms have withered and perished; the tree has become stricken and fruitless. It is not reasonable that man should hold to the old tree, claiming that its life forces are undiminished, its fruit unequaled, its existence eternal. The seed of reality must be sown again in human hearts in order that a new tree may grow therefrom and new divine fruits refresh the world. By this means the nations and peoples now divergent in religion will be brought into unity, imitations will be forsaken, and a universal brotherhood in reality itself will be established. Warfare and strife will cease among mankind; all will be reconciled as servants of God. For all are sheltered beneath the tree of His providence and mercy. God is kind to all; He is the giver of bounty to all alike, even as Jesus Christ has declared that God "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"--that is to say, the mercy of God is universal. All humanity is under the protection of His love and favor, and unto all He has pointed the way of guidance and progress. Progress is of two kinds: material and spiritual. The former is attained through observation of the surrounding existence and constitutes the foundation of civilization. Spiritual progress is through the breaths of the Holy Spirit and is the awakening of the conscious soul of man to perceive the reality of Divinity. Material progress ensures the happiness of the human world. Spiritual progress ensures the happiness and eternal continuance of the soul. The Prophets of God have founded the laws of divine civilization. They have been the root and fundamental source of all knowledge. They have established the principles of human brotherhood, of fraternity, which is of various kinds--such as the fraternity of family, of race, of nation and of ethical motives. These forms of fraternity, these bonds of brotherhood, are merely temporal and transient in association. They do not ensure harmony and are usually productive of disagreement. They do not prevent warfare and strife; on the contrary, they are selfish, restricted and fruitful causes of enmity and hatred among mankind. The spiritual brotherhood which is enkindled and established through the breaths of the Holy Spirit unites nations and removes the cause of warfare and strife. It transforms mankind into one great family and establishes the foundations of the oneness of humanity. It promulgates the spirit of international agreement and ensures universal peace. Therefore, we must investigate the foundation of this heavenly fraternity. We must forsake all imitations and promote the reality of the divine teachings. In accordance with these principles and actions and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, both material and spiritual happiness shall become realized. Until all nations and peoples become united by the bonds of the Holy Spirit in this real fraternity, until national and international prejudices are effaced in the reality of this spiritual brotherhood, true progress, prosperity and lasting happiness will not be attained by man. This is the century of new and universal nationhood. Sciences have advanced; industries have progressed; politics have been reformed; liberty has been proclaimed; justice is awakening. This is the century of motion, divine stimulus and accomplishment, the century of human solidarity and altruistic service, the century of universal peace and the reality of the divine Kingdom.

UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

Comments

MAY 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1920, CHARLES GREENLEAF, A DISCIPLE OF `ABDU'L-BAHÁ, DIED. HE HAD SERVED ON THE ALL-MALE CHICAGO HOUSE OF SPIRITUALITY, WHICH WAS COMPLEMENTED BY THE WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY OF TEACHING. WHEN TODAY'S SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES BECOME HOUSES OF JUSTICE, THEY WILL ONCE MORE ....

May 24. On this date in 1920, Charles Greenleaf, a Disciple of `Abdu'l-Bahá, died. He had served on the all-male Chicago House of Spirituality, which was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching. When today's Spiritual Assemblies become Houses of Justice, they will once more be exclusively male.

On March 16, 1900, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12.

On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandarání of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá'u'lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá'ís will eventually evolve."

(30 November 1930)

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270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.

"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 24, 2001, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER "TO THE BELIEVERS GATHERED FOR THE EVENTS MARKING THE COMPLETION OF THE PROJECTS ON MOUNT CARMEL" NOTING "THE WORLD IS MOVING THROUGH A PERIOD OF SOCIAL PARALYSIS, TYRANNY AND ANARCHY..."

May 24. On this date in 2001, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter "To the Believers Gathered for the Events Marking the Completion of the Projects on Mount Carmel" noting "the world is moving through a period of social paralysis, tyranny and anarchy..."

The Universal House of Justice

24 May 2001

To the Believers Gathered for the Events Marking the Completion of the Projects on Mount Carmel

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

One hundred and forty-eight years have passed since the moment in the darkness of the Síyáh-Chál when Bahá’u’lláh received the Divine summons to rise and proclaim to all on earth the dawning of the Day of God:

Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy pen. . . . Erelong God will raise up the treasures of the earth—men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him.

In terms of historical time, it is but the briefest of spaces that separates that primal moment from the splendid victory we celebrate here this week. You who have come together from every corner of the earth and from every segment of the human family represent a cross-section of those whom Bahá’u’lláh has raised up to aid Him, and no one among us can hope to express adequately the gratitude we feel at being in that company.

The majestic buildings that now stand along the Arc traced for them by Shoghi Effendi on the slope of the Mountain of God, together with the magnificent flight of garden terraces that embrace the Shrine of the Báb, are an outward expression of the immense power animating the Cause we serve. They offer timeless witness to the fact that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh have successfully laid the foundations of a worldwide community transcending all differences that divide the human race, and have brought into existence the principal institutions of a unique and unassailable Administrative Order that shapes this community's life. In the transformation that has taken place on Mount Carmel, the Bahá'í Cause emerges as a visible and compelling reality on the global stage, as the focal center of forces that will, in God's good time, bring about the reconstruction of society, and as a mystic source of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it.

Reflection on what the Bahá'í community has accomplished throws into heartbreaking perspective the suffering and deprivation engulfing the great majority of our fellow human beings. It is necessary that it should do so, because the effect is to open our minds and souls to vital implications of the mission Bahá'u'lláh has laid on us. **"Know thou of a truth," He declares, "these great oppressions that have befallen the world are preparing it for the advent of the Most Great Justice." "God be praised!" 'Abdu'l-Bahá adds, "The sun of justice hath risen above the horizon of Bahá'u'lláh. For in His Tablets the foundations of such a justice** have been laid as no mind hath, from the beginning of creation, conceived." In the final analysis, it is this Divine purpose that all our activities are intended to serve, and we will advance this purpose to the degree that we understand what is at stake in the efforts we are making to teach the Faith, to establish and consolidate its institutions, and to intensify the influence it is exerting in the life of society.

Humanity's crying need will not be met by a struggle among competing ambitions or by protest against one or another of the countless wrongs afflicting a desperate age. It calls, rather, for a fundamental change of consciousness, for a wholehearted embrace of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching that the time has come when each human being on earth must learn to accept responsibility for the welfare of the entire human family. **Commitment to this revolutionizing principle will increasingly empower individual believers and Bahá'í institutions alike in awakening others to the Day of God and to the latent spiritual and moral capacities that can change this world into another world.** We demonstrate this commitment, Shoghi Effendi tells us, by our rectitude of conduct towards others, by the discipline of our own natures, and by our complete freedom from the prejudices that cripple collective action in the society around us and frustrate positive impulses towards change.

The standards set out by the Guardian apply to the entire Bahá'í community, both in its collective life and in the lives of its individual members. They hold, however, particular implications for Bahá'í youth, who are blessed with the enviable advantages of high energy, flexibility of mind and, to a great extent, freedom of movement. The world that Bahá'í youth are inheriting is one in which the distribution of educational, economic and other basic opportunities is grossly unjust. Bahá'í youth must not be daunted by such barriers. Their challenge is to understand the real condition of humanity and to forge among themselves enduring spiritual bonds that free them not only from racial and national divisions but also from those created by social and material conditions, and that will fit them to carry forward the great trust reposed in them.

Bahá'u'lláh encourages us to anticipate from the youth of His community a much earlier advance to maturity than is characteristic of the rest of society. Clearly, that does not in any way diminish the importance of the pursuit of education, of economic realities, or of family obligations. It does mean that Bahá'í youth can accept—and should be encouraged to accept—a responsibility of their own for moral leadership in the transformation of society. In vindication of these words, we invoke the memory of the One Whose Shrine has today set the Mountain of God ablaze with light, and the memory of the band of youthful heroes and heroines whose greatness of soul and sacrifice of self launched on its course the enterprise in which we are engaged.

The achievement we are today celebrating brings into focus two paradoxical realities. Within the Faith itself, the gathering strength of the Bahá'í community presages a great surge forward, intimations of which are already everywhere apparent. Inevitably, as Shoghi Effendi several times emphasized, this advance will excite even more intense opposition than the Cause has so far encountered, opposition that will in turn release the greater forces needed for the still more demanding tasks that lie ahead.

The world in which our efforts are taking place is likewise undergoing profound changes. On the one hand, the vast network of agencies and individuals that promote understanding and cooperation among diverse peoples affirms ever more powerfully the growing recognition that the "earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." **On the other hand, it is equally clear that the world is moving through a period of social paralysis, tyranny and anarchy, a period marked by the widespread neglect of both governmental and personal responsibility, the ultimate consequences of which no one on earth can foresee.** The effect of both developments, as Shoghi Effendi also pointed out, will be to awaken in the hearts of those who share this planet with us a longing for unity and justice that can be met only by the Cause of God.

A long and arduous process of struggle, experimentation and construction has led to the victories that lift our hearts as a new century opens. **Through the rapidly proliferating system of institutes and the energy being invested everywhere in area growth strategies, the Bahá'í community has moved swiftly to capitalize on what has been achieved. However deep may be the gloom enveloping the world, the future has never looked so bright for the prosecution of Bahá'u'lláh's mission.** We who have been privileged to gather here this week have witnessed, with our own eyes, the dawning fulfillment of the words revealed by the Lord of Hosts on this mountain over a century ago, words which cause the very atoms of the earth to vibrate: "Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation."

Such a privilege carries with it an equally great responsibility, the responsibility to do our part, whatever the sacrifice, whatever the difficulty, to see that the poignant desire expressed by Bahá'u'lláh on that historic occasion is fulfilled: "Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation—a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: 'Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven.'"

With all the fervor of thankful hearts, we will pray at the Holy Threshold that Bahá'u'lláh will bless and confirm every effort you make to advance His purpose for the redemption of humankind and the healing of its ills.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 24, 1954, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THE EUROPEAN TEACHING COMMITTEE THAT "EVERY BAHÁ'Í, AND MOST PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR HOMES AND GONE TO SERVE IN FOREIGN FIELDS, SHOULD KNOW OF, AND TURN THEIR GAZE TO, MARION JACK."

May 24. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi wrote the European Teaching Committee that "every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who have left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."

1939. Every Bahá'í, Especially Those Who Leave Their Homes to Serve in Foreign Lands, Should Turn Their Gaze to Marion Jack

"For over thirty years, with an enlarged heart, and many other ailments, she remained at her post in Bulgaria. Never well-to-do, she often suffered actual poverty and want; want of heat, want of clothing, want of food, when her money failed to reach her because Bulgaria had come under the Soviet zone of influence. She was bombed, lost her possessions, she was evacuated, she lived in drafty, cold dormitories for many, many months in the country, she returned valiant to the capital of Bulgaria after the war, and continued, on foot, to carry out her teaching work.

"The Guardian himself urged her strongly, when the war first began to threaten to cut her off in Bulgaria, to go to Switzerland. She was a Canadian subject, and ran great risks by remaining, not to mention the danger and the privations of war. However, she begged the Guardian not to insist, and assured him her one desire was to remain with her spiritual children. This she did, up to the last breath of her glorious life. Her tomb will become a national shrine, immensely loved and revered, as the Faith rises in stature in that country.

"He thinks that every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who have left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the European Teaching Committee, May 24, 1954)

Marion Jack was born on December 1, 1866, in Saint John, New Brunswick.

An early Canadian Bahá'í, she converted to the Bahá'í Faith in Paris, and went on to teach English to the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akká for a short time. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited

London in 1911, he gave a talk at her home, in High Street, Kensington. In 1931, she pioneered to Bulgaria, where she lived until her death in 1954.

On April 24, 1947, Marion Jack, a pioneer in Bulgaria, wrote "I had a letter this week from Haifa, and as I am told to persevere and keep on working I can turn a deaf ear to certain friends who think I should go back where I came from, just because I have turned 80. I tell them that I never suffer in anticipation of what may come. It is the most foolish of all worries — nor do I feel in any way sure that I may not reach 85 or even more. As I feel sure that the Guardian senses to a great extent the future, because his heart is pure, I know he would not keep on urging me to be useful here if things would go hard with me..."

247. "I had a letter this week from Haifa, and as I am told to persevere and keep on working I can turn a deaf ear to certain friends who think I should go back where I came from, just because I have turned 80. I tell them that I never suffer in anticipation of what may come. It is the most foolish of all worries — nor do I feel in any way sure that I may not reach 85 or even more. As I feel sure that the Guardian senses to a great extent the future, because his heart is pure, I know he would not keep on urging me to be useful here if things would go hard with me..."

— From a letter by Marion Jack to her niece, April 24, 1947

Comments

MAY 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1927, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "UNDOUBTEDLY, AS THE INFLUENCE OF GOD'S FAITH BECOMES MORE PERVASIVE, THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO WISH TO OBSTRUCT ITS PROGRESS WILL ALSO GROW; NEW AND INCREASINGLY FORMIDABLE ADVERSARIES WILL COME TO THE FORE; AND MISCHIEF-MAKERS ..."

May 24. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Undoubtedly, as the influence of God's Faith becomes more pervasive, the number of those who wish to obstruct its progress will also grow; new and increasingly formidable adversaries will come to the fore; and mischief-makers, appearing under various extraordinary guises, will seek surreptitiously to goad to action all those who harbour resentment or bear ill will towards this Cause, and will raise aloft the standards of sedition."

91 Undoubtedly, as the influence of God's Faith becomes more pervasive, the number of those who wish to obstruct its progress will also grow; new and increasingly formidable adversaries will come to the fore; and mischief-makers, appearing under various extraordinary guises, will seek surreptitiously to goad to action all those who harbour resentment or bear ill will towards this Cause, and will raise aloft the standards of sedition. Under these circumstances it is essential for the friends on the one hand to be alert and watchful, and on the other to arouse the vigilance and strengthen the allegiance of their fellow-believers, to guard the integrity of the Word of God, and to maintain harmony and unity amongst His loved ones. Herein lies the supreme duty of the friends of God, and the highest means by which they can render service to His Cause.

(In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 24 May 1927 to an individual believer, translated from the Persian)

Comments

MAY 24. ON THIS DATE IN 1967, MILDRED EILEEN CLARK, LATER NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS, WAS BORN IN MANCHESTER, ILLINOIS.

May 24. On this date in 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark, later named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands, was born in Manchester, Illinois.

Born in Manchester, Illinois, on May 24, 1892, Mildred Clark chose pioneering as her field of service from the earliest days of her conversion to the Bahá'í Faith.

In the first Seven Year Plan (1937-1944) assigned to the United States she pioneered to Denver, Colorado, and there married George Clark. In 1946, at the inception of the second Seven Year Plan (1946-1953), she offered to go to Europe and was requested by the European Teaching Committee to settle in Norway where, in 1948, she assisted in the formation of the first Spiritual Assembly of Oslo.

In January 1950, she pioneered to the Netherlands and in 1952 she was asked to go to Luxembourg to assist in making the necessary arrangements for the European Teaching Conference held there in September 1952. Following this she returned to Oslo and actively resumed her service there.

While attending the European Intercontinental Teaching Conference held in Stockholm in July 1953, Mildred Clark volunteered to serve in Svolvaer, Lofoten Islands. She was one of the first to arise in the Ten Year Crusade, arriving at her post in August 1953. For this service she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi. She remained at this distant post for more then ten years, later returning to Norway. When the need for pioneers became apparent in Finland, she moved to that country, her final pioneering goal.

On May 27, 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark died in Turku, Finland.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

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MAY 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1938, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE THAT "THE VERY PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE CORRESPONDING DECLINE IN ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE OTHER WILL INEVITABLY INCITE CHRISTIAN ECCLESIASTICAL LEADERS TO VEHEMENTLY OPPOSE AND UNDERMINE THE FAITH."

May 25. On this date in 1938, Shoghi Effendi wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada that "the very progress of the Cause on the one hand, and the corresponding decline in ecclesiastical organizations on the other will inevitably incite Christian ecclesiastical leaders to vehemently oppose and undermine the Faith."

Later on, when the very progress of the Cause on the one hand, and the corresponding decline in ecclesiastical organizations on the other will inevitably incite Christian ecclesiastical leaders to vehemently oppose and undermine the Faith, the believers will then have a real chance to defend and vindicate the Cause....

(In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 25 May 1938 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

Comments

MAY 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1941, SHOGHI EFFENDI ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE NORTH AMERICAN BAHÁ'ÍS TITLED "THE ANGER OF GOD AND HIS CORRECTION" WHEREIN HE STATES THAT THE WORLD WARS ARE GOD'S "DIRECT INTERPOSITION...CHASTENS THE CHILDREN OF MEN FOR THEIR REFUSAL TO ACCLAIM THE CENTURY-OLD MESSAGE..."

May 25. On this date in 1941, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the North American Bahá'ís titled "The Anger of God and His Correction" wherein he states that the World Wars are God's "direct interposition" being "the rod of both the anger of God and of His correction. The fierceness of its devastating power chastens the children of men for their refusal to acclaim the century-old Message of their promised, their Heaven-sent Redeemer...The races of the world, Nordic, Slavonic, Mongolian, Arab and African, are alike subjected to its consuming violence."

82-The Anger of God and His Correction

25 MAY 1941

82.1 The internecine struggle, now engulfing the generality of mankind, is increasingly assuming, in its range and ferocity, the proportions of the titanic upheaval **foreshadowed as far back as seventy years ago by Bahá'u'lláh. It can be viewed in no other light except as a direct interposition by Him Who is the Ordainer of the Universe, the Judge of all men and the Deliverer of the nations. It is the rod of both the anger of God and of His correction. The fierceness of its devastating power chastens the children of men for their refusal to acclaim the century-old Message of their promised, their Heaven-sent Redeemer.** The fury of its flames, on the other hand, purges away the dross, and welds the limbs of humanity into one single organism, indivisible, purified, God-conscious and Divinely directed. Its immediate cause can be traced to the forces engendered by the last war of which it may be truly regarded as the direct continuation.

82.2 Its first sparks were kindled on the eastern shores of the Asiatic continent, enveloping two sister races of the world in a conflagration which no force seems able to either quench or circumscribe. This cataclysmic process was accelerated by the outbreak of a fierce conflict in the heart of Europe, fanning into flame age-long animosities and unchaining a series of calamities as swift as they were appalling. As the turmoil gathered momentum, it swept remorselessly into its vortex the most powerful nations of the European continent-the chief protagonists of that highly-vaunted yet lamentably defective civilization. The mounting tide of its havoc and devastation soon overspread the northernmost regions of that afflicted continent, subsequently ravaged the shores of the Mediterranean, and invaded the African continent as far as Ethiopia and the surrounding territories. The Balkan countries, as predicted by Abdu'l-Bahá, were soon to sustain the impact of this tragic ordeal, communicating in their turn the commotions to which they had been subjected to both the Near and Middle East, wherein are enshrined the Heart of the Faith itself, its Cradle, its chief Center of Pilgrimage, and its most sacred and historic sites.

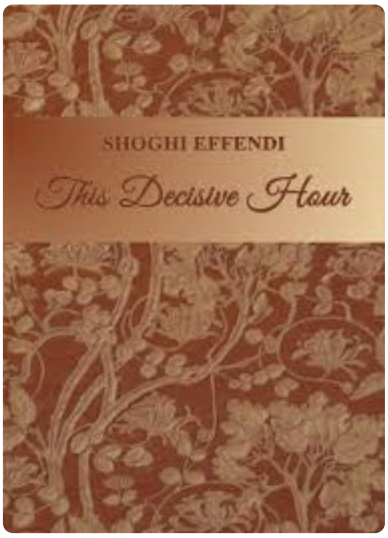
82.3 Its menace is overleaping the limits of the Old World and is plunging into consternation the Great Republic of the West, as well as the peoples of Central and South America. The New World as well as the Old is experiencing the terrific impact of this disruptive force. Even the peoples of the Antipodes are trembling before the approaching tempest that threatens to burst on their heads.

82.4 **The races of the world, Nordic, Slavonic, Mongolian, Arab and African, are alike subjected to its consuming violence.** The world's religious systems are no less affected by the universal paralysis which is creeping over the minds and souls of men. The persecution of world Jewry, the rapid deterioration of Christian institutions, the intestine division and disorders of Islam, are but manifestations of the fear and trembling that has seized humanity in its hour of unprecedented turmoil and peril. On the high seas, in the air, on land, in the forefront of battle, in the palaces of kings and the cottages of peasants, in the most hallowed sanctuaries, whether secular or religious, the evidences of God's retributive act and mysterious discipline are manifest. Its heavy toll is steadily mounting-a holocaust sparing neither prince nor peasant, neither man nor woman, neither young nor old.

82.5 The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh-that priceless gem of Divine Revelation enshrining the Spirit of God and incarnating His Purpose for mankind in this age-can neither aspire nor expect to escape unhurt amid the hurricane of human disasters that blows around it. By most men unnoticed, scorned and ridiculed by some, feared and challenged by others, this world redemptive Faith, for whose precious sake the world is undergoing such agony, finds its virgin strength assailed, and its infant institutions hemmed in, by the dark forces which a godless civilization has unloosed over the face of the planet. In the Old World, whether in Europe, Asia or Africa, it is being buffeted about, ostracized, arraigned and repressed. In certain countries its community life is being extinguished, in others a ban is severely imposed on its propagation, in still others its members are denied all intercourse with its World Center. Dangers, grave and unsuspected, confront its Cradle and surround its very Heart.

82.6 Not so, however, with the countries of the Western Hemisphere. The call of Bahá'u'lláh summons, at this challenging hour, the peoples of the New World, and its leaders to redress the balance of the Old. "O Rulers of America," He thus addresses the Chief Magistrates of that continent, "and the Presidents of the Republics therein! ... Adorn the temple of your dominion with the ornament of Justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Maker of the heavens." The Great Republic of the West, an object of special solicitude throughout the ministry of the Center of the Covenant, whose soil has been hallowed by His footsteps, and the foundation of whose edifice-the Mother Temple of the West-has been consecrated by His hand, has been singled out through the operation of His Will, and been invested by His Pen with an unique, an inescapable, a weighty and most sacred responsibility. The Mission entrusted to the community of the North American believers in the darkest days of the last war is, after a period of incubation of well-nigh twenty years, and through the instrumentality of the administrative agencies erected after Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, efflorescing under our very eyes. Already, since the inception of the Seven Year Plan, this community can well claim to have attained, through its deeds, a stature that dwarfs its sister communities, and can glory in a parentage that embraces every Republic of Latin America. The first Mashriqu'l-Adhkar of the West, its beauteous and noble handiwork, is virtually completed. A nucleus for a future flourishing local community is already formed in every state and province in North America. The administrative structure, following the pattern of its prototype in the U.S.A., is, through the agency of that same Plan, raising its triumphant head in the Central and South American Republics. The Plan itself, propelled by the agencies released by those immortal Tablets which constitute its charter, bids fair, in the fifth year of its operation, to exceed the highest expectations of those who have so courageously launched it. Its consummation, coinciding with the termination of the first century of the Bahá'í Era, will mark the opening of yet another phase in a series of crusades which must carry, in the course of the succeeding century, the privileged recipients of those epoch-making Tablets beyond the Western Hemisphere to the uttermost ends of the earth, to implant the banner, and lay an unassailable basis for the administrative structure of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

82.7 The quality and magnitude of the work already achieved by these stalwart champions of God's New World Order are inexpressibly exhilarating and infinitely meritorious. The immensity of the task still to be performed staggers our fancy and inflames our imagination. The potentialities with which those tasks are endowed elude our shrewdest calculations. The promise they enshrine is too dazzling to contemplate. What else can we do but bow our heads in thanksgiving and reverence, steel our hearts in preparation for the strenuous days ahead, and intensify a hundredfold our resolution to carry on the task to which our hands are set at present.



Comments

MAY 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1975, THE UHJ WROTE ALL NSAS, "THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING IS TO ATTRACT HUMAN BEINGS TO THE DIVINE MESSAGE AND SO IMBUE THEM WITH ITS SPIRIT THAT THEY WILL DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO ITS SERVICE, AND THIS WORLD WILL BECOME ANOTHER WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE ANOTHER PEOPLE."

May 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies, "the purpose of teaching is to attract human beings to the divine Message and so imbue them with its spirit that they will dedicate themselves to its service, and this world will become another world and its people another people."

The Universal House of Justice

25 May 1975

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

A fifth of the span allotted to the Five Year Plan has run its course and we have passed a major milestone in the destinies of that Plan. It is appropriate for every National Spiritual Assembly to pause in order to appraise its position, and that of the community which it represents and serves, and to determine its progress in relation to the goals with which it stands identified.

To help each National Spiritual Assembly in this appraisal we send you the following statement which, under various headings, outlines the impressions we have gathered and comments we are prompted to make on the prosecution of certain goals of the Plan. Although some of the items may not be directly applicable to you, you may find them of interest. Each National Spiritual Assembly should determine, in the light of the goals assigned to it, to what extent each of our observations is applicable to its work.

Teaching—Expansion and Consolidation

Teaching the Faith embraces many diverse activities, all of which are vital to success, and each of which reinforces the other. Time and again the beloved Guardian emphasized that expansion and consolidation are twin and inseparable aspects of teaching that must proceed simultaneously, yet one still hears believers discussing the virtues of one as against the other. The purpose of teaching is not complete when a person declares that he has accepted Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age; **the purpose of teaching is to attract human beings to the divine Message and so imbue them with its spirit that they will dedicate themselves to its service, and this world will become another world and its people another people.** Viewed in this light a declaration of faith is merely a milestone along the way—albeit a very important one. Teaching may also be likened to kindling a fire, the fire of faith, in the hearts of men. If a fire burns only so long as the match is held to it, it cannot truly be said to have been kindled; to be kindled it must continue to burn of its own accord. Thereafter more fuel can be added and the flame can be fanned, but even if left alone for a period, a truly kindled fire will not be extinguished by the first breath of wind.

The aim, therefore, of all Bahá'í institutions and Bahá'í teachers is to advance continually to new areas and strata of society, with such thoroughness that, as the spark of faith kindles the hearts of the hearers, the teaching of the believers continues until, and even after, they shoulder their responsibilities as Bahá'ís and participate in both the teaching and administrative work of the Faith.

There are now many areas in the world where thousands of people have accepted the Faith so quickly that it has been beyond the capacity of the existing Bahá'í communities to consolidate adequately these advances. The people in these areas must be progressively deepened in their understanding of the Faith, in accordance with well-laid plans, so that their communities may, as soon as possible, become sources of great strength to the work of the Faith and begin to manifest the pattern of Bahá'í life.

Reaching Remote Areas—an Immediate Challenge

At the same time there is a challenge of great urgency facing the worldwide Bahá'í community. **When launching the Ten Year Crusade, Shoghi Effendi urged the believers to "carry the torch of the Faith to regions so remote, so backward, so inhospitable that neither the light of Christianity or Islam has, after the revolution of centuries, as yet penetrated." A number of such regions still exist in places like New Guinea, the heart of Africa and the Amazon Basin in South America.** As the influence of civilization spreads, the age-old ways of life of the inhabitants of these regions will inevitably perish, and they will rapidly be infected with the materialistic ideas of a decadent civilization. It is our pressing duty to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to such people while they are still purehearted and receptive, and through it to prepare them for the changed world which will come upon them.

Teaching Tribal Peoples and Minorities

In addition to the tribes in these remote regions of the world, **there are tribes and minorities who still live in their traditional ways in the midst of other cultures.** All too often such peoples are despised and ignored by the nations among whom they dwell, but we should seek them out, teach them the Cause of God, and enrich through their membership the Bahá'í communities of the lands in which they live. So important is this goal that each National Spiritual Assembly should study the requirements for teaching each of the different tribes and groups within its area, appoint a committee for this purpose—even a special committee for each tribe or minority where this is feasible and desirable—and launch a series of well-conceived, far-reaching campaigns to bring about the enrollment of these peoples within the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and the establishment among them of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Pioneering

Great challenges and opportunities for teaching often occur far from large well-established Bahá'í communities; this is especially true in respect of many of the tribal peoples. Pioneering and travel teaching are therefore of the greatest importance for the accomplishment of teaching plans. It is not always difficult to see what the ideal solution for any particular teaching problem may be; however, ideal solutions are seldom available, and the Assemblies which achieve the most outstanding results are those which have developed the skill of using to their best advantage whatever means they have at their command and whatever assistance can be given to them. Pioneers, for example, all have different capacities, different skills, different problems and different responsibilities. A National Assembly may see that its most urgent need is for a financially independent married couple who can live in a remote village area to conduct regular classes for the believers there; but what it actually receives are two single middle-aged ladies who need to work to support themselves and can only get jobs in one of the large towns. Instead of despairing, a resourceful Assembly will immediately see whether the presence of either or both of these ladies in such a town would enable one or more native believers to pioneer to the village area. Even if this does not work out, it will nevertheless do all it can to assist the two pioneers to settle down and will make the utmost use of whatever services they can render, services which may well, in the long run, be of inestimable benefit to that national community.

There are several ways of pioneering, and all are entirely valid and are of great help to the teaching work. There is, **first of all**, the pioneer who goes to a particular country, devotes the remainder of his life to the service of the Faith in that land and finally lays his bones to rest in its soil. **Secondly**, there is the pioneer who goes to a post, serves valiantly there until the native Bahá'í community is strongly established, and then moves on to new fields of service. **Thirdly**, there are those, for example youth between the completion of their schooling and the starting of their chosen profession, who go pioneering for a specific limited period.

Ideally, of course, a pioneer should be, or become as soon as possible, financially independent of the Fund in his chosen post, not only to husband the financial resources of the Faith but because it is a Bahá'í principle that everyone should work and support himself and his family whenever possible, and there is no such profession as pioneer or teacher in the Bahá'í Faith as there are professional missionaries and clergymen in other religions. Nevertheless it must be recognized that in some posts where pioneers are desperately needed there is no possibility for them to get work. Either there is no work available in the area or else the pioneer is refused a work permit because he is a foreigner. In such cases it is essential for the Assemblies to provide financial assistance to support the pioneer for as long as is necessary.

There are a number of methods of **financing pioneers** in areas where work is unobtainable. Believers can be found who have independent means and are willing to pioneer to the area and live on whatever income they have, however slender. There are those who, in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's injunction, have been deputized by friends who are unable to go themselves. Believers may be found who are willing to go to such an area for a specific period supported by the meager budget that the Fund can afford, with the clear understanding that at the end of that period they will return from the pioneer post and become self-supporting again; in such a way an area can be serviced with a succession of pioneers. Then there are those believers who are willing to serve in a remote and inhospitable area, but whose age or situation makes it clear from the outset that they will not be able to become self-supporting again; when the need is great and cannot be met in any other way, an Assembly would be fully justified in supporting them, but it should realize from the outset the extent of the responsibility it is incurring for an indefinite period into the future.

Naturally these ways of financing pioneering are not mutually exclusive. A person, for example, can be partially self-supporting and assisted to only a limited degree; or a pioneer may go to an area with the intention of finding work but is unable to do so and the Assembly repeatedly extends the period of financial support until the time comes when he is no longer able to become self-supporting anywhere. In such a case the Assembly needs to watch the process very carefully so that, on the one hand, it does not incur a permanent responsibility it had not intended, and on the other, does not commit the injustice of terminating the financial support extended to a pioneer at a time when he has become unemployable, and is unable to obtain any other means of support.

Traveling Teaching

While pioneers provide a very valuable long-term reinforcement of a community and are often the only feasible means for opening new areas—and here we are speaking not only of pioneers from foreign lands but of **homefront pioneers** as well, the use of whom must be greatly developed in most countries—a second vital reinforcement of the work is provided by traveling teachers. As mentioned in the message sent to all believers at Riḍván, **a new international travel teaching program** is now being launched. National Assemblies and their committees, therefore, need to develop a threefold integrated program for travel teaching. Firstly, there should be within each national community regular circuits of local traveling teachers, that is to say of believers who are members of that national community, whether native or pioneers, who are able and willing to devote time to this activity. Secondly, and integrated within these circuits, provision should be made for planned visits of traveling teachers from abroad. Thirdly, each National Assembly should establish an agency and a procedure for taking advantage of the unheralded arrival of visitors from abroad, or of sudden offers from believers on the homefront, who would be able to give valuable help in the fields of travel teaching or proclamation if properly organized. Such an agency would, of course, be responsible for evaluating the capacity of those who offer services because while an unexpected offer can often provide a very valuable teaching opportunity, it is also true to say that some Bahá'í communities have been exhausted and their work hindered by the arrival of a succession of traveling Bahá'ís who were not really suited, for lack of a language or for other reasons, to assist with teaching in the area concerned. Friends who travel spontaneously in this way can do valuable teaching themselves but should not expect the assistance of local administrative institutions if they have not arranged the trip in advance.

Correspondence Courses

Only a few National Spiritual Assemblies have been given the specific goal of developing and conducting correspondence courses; however, those National Assemblies who have the goal of training selected believers to assist in consolidating local communities would find it worthwhile to consider how the use of correspondence courses could help in the fulfillment of this goal. For example, once the selection of trainees has been made, the first stage in their training could well be a correspondence deepening course which would ascertain the degree of interest and capacity of each trainee and also prepare him to attend a series of lectures or classes which would follow as a second stage. The entire training process could consist of several stages interspersed in this way. This combination of two methods has the advantage of helping the Assembly to ascertain at the outset which trainees have the capacity and desire to continue with the course, thus leading to a better selection and helping to ensure that the costs of holding classes and bringing trainees to them are incurred only in respect of those whose interest and capacity have been established.

Economy can be exercised by holding the deepening classes in smaller gatherings by grouping several neighboring local communities together and sending one or more teachers to the area. This might prove more economical than inviting the selected trainees to, say, the capital, and having to accommodate and feed them during the period of the course.

Teaching Conferences

Teaching Conferences can have a great value for the advance of the Faith. Their aim is to strengthen the bonds of unity and fellowship among the friends, to increase their involvement in the teaching work and their interest in its progress, and to serve as magnets to attract divine confirmations. They are also rallying points for the believers, evidences of the vitality of their love for Bahá’u’lláh, and potent instruments for generating enthusiasm and spiritual drive for advancing the interests of the Faith.

Certain National Spiritual Assemblies, which are not among the majority who are already doing so, have been assigned the goal of holding at least one National Teaching Conference during each year. The purpose of this is to provide a national event of major importance in addition to the annual National Convention to stimulate the interest and reorientate the efforts of the friends, focusing their attention upon the current urgent needs of the Plan. These National Teaching Conferences should, therefore, be held some months away from Riḍván, or they will lose a great part of the intended effect.

As the eight International Conferences will soon be upon us, it is important for National Assemblies to decide as soon as possible, in consultation with the Counselors, whether it would be feasible and helpful to hold a national conference soon after, or possibly immediately before, the International Conference nearest to their area. The sooner this study is made and decisions taken and announced, the greater will be the participation of the friends, locally and from abroad.

Newsletters

Although during the past year a marked improvement has been noticed in certain countries in the standard and regularity of the Bahá'í newsletters, the development of this organ of Bahá'í communication still needs great attention in most national communities. A special committee should be appointed, on which members of the National Spiritual Assembly could well serve, with the task of making the national newsletter a powerful instrument of direct and regular contact with the friends, which will disseminate news among them, stimulate and maintain their interest in the growth of the Faith in the world and throughout the area of national jurisdiction, share with them the National Spiritual Assembly's plans, hopes and aspirations, convey to them its comments on Bahá'í developments of special significance, and cause the believers to anticipate the future with feelings of excitement and confidence. The doors of communication between the friends, the Local Spiritual Assemblies and the National Spiritual Assembly should always be open. The one means which will contribute most to the promotion of this open-door policy is the regular issue of an interesting and heartwarming newsletter. In certain countries, we are glad to see, there are in addition to the national newsletter, news bulletins issued on regional or district levels. The importance of these secondary organs of Bahá'í communication acquires added weight in areas where differences of language make the issue of bulletins in a local language of each area highly desirable, if not essential. Literature

When each National Spiritual Assembly carefully compares the demands of the waiting public and the needs of the believers for Bahá'í literature with the current supply, it will realize how urgent is the need for it to multiply its efforts to ensure that a comprehensive range of our literature is made constantly available. The basic literature of the Faith must be translated into languages that are most suitable and in demand for the spread and development of the Faith in accordance with the goals of the Plan. In each national area the agencies for obtaining and disseminating Bahá'í literature should be greatly strengthened so that they will efficiently ensure an uninterrupted supply of the literature which is available from the various Publishing Trusts and organize its distribution throughout the area, through Local Assemblies and groups, by sale at conferences and summer schools, and directly to individuals. At the same time these agencies should ensure that the monies received from the sale of literature are kept separate from other funds of the Faith and are used for the replenishment of stocks of books and the widening of the range of literature available. National Assemblies must also give consideration to the need to cover the cost of certain literature out of the National Fund, so that it can be supplied free or sold at a price within the reach of those who urgently require it.

Radio and Television

A compilation has recently been made from the letters written on behalf of the Guardian and a copy is attached for your information. This brief compilation shows the importance that Shoghi Effendi attached to the use of radio as a means of teaching and proclaiming the Faith in countries where such activity is possible.

The Universal House of Justice has initiated a pilot project in Ecuador for the purchase and operation of a Bahá'í radio station, and at the present time this is the only one for which sufficient funds are available. However, the actual owning of a radio station is not the only way of making use of this medium. National Spiritual Assemblies responsible for countries where Bahá'í radio programs would raise no objection from the civil authorities, should regard it as their bounden duty to explore, if they have not already done so, whatever options are open to them to utilize radio to sow the seeds of the Faith as widely as they can and to broadcast its divine teachings, as well as to assist in the consolidation of the local Bahá'í communities.

Where the use of television broadcasts is open to Bahá'í communities they should also take the utmost advantage of this opportunity. Contact with the Authorities

The events of the past year have demonstrated clearly that the enemies of the Faith are intensifying their attacks on the precious Cause of God. The Five Year Plan calls for a planned and sustained effort, under the close supervision of each National Spiritual Assembly, to foster cordial relations with responsible government officials and prominent people. In every country where the doors of contact with those in authority are open to the friends, the National Spiritual Assembly should, as indicated in our letter of Naw-Rúz 131, appoint a special committee to be given the task of finding effective ways of informing the authorities about the Faith, of dispelling any misgivings and of removing any misapprehensions which may be deceitfully created by those who are striving to extinguish the fire of God's Faith. We cannot overemphasize the necessity of this activity and the need to use utmost tact and wisdom in pursuing it, for, not only will it facilitate the further proclamation and recognition of the Faith, but, as opposition to and misconceptions about the aims and purposes of the Bahá'ís increase, when a moment of crisis arrives the institutions of the Faith may know where to turn, whose advice and assistance to seek and how to minimize the effects of opposition.

Closely linked with the above undertaking, in countries where the Faith is not yet recognized, is the need to apply for such recognition if the laws of the country permit and if the Universal House of Justice has approved that an approach be made to the authorities on the subject. In other countries where some measure of recognition, such as the incorporation of Assemblies, has been obtained, National Spiritual Assemblies should be alert to the possibilities which are open to them to widen the scope and broaden the base of the recognition obtained for Bahá'í institutions, the Bahá'í marriage certificate and Bahá'í Holy Days. These measures will not only secure for the Faith a higher degree of legal protection, but will enhance its stature in the eyes of the authorities and the general public.

Wisdom in the Use of Bahá'í Funds

The Five Year Plan emphasizes the obligation of the friends, in view of the growing needs of the Faith to ensure that a generous outpouring of contributions is offered in support of Bahá'í Funds, and encourages Bahá'í communities at present dependent on outside help to aim at becoming self-supporting. While all National Spiritual Assemblies have the obligation to administer Bahá'í funds wisely and judiciously, those National Spiritual Assemblies which depend to a large extent on budgetary assistance from the World Center have an even greater responsibility, so to speak, to carefully supervise expenditures. The more rigorous the exercise of economy on the part of National Spiritual Assemblies, the sooner will the body of the friends be encouraged to feel financial responsibility toward the progress of the Faith in their areas, to place greater reliance upon the wise administration of the National Spiritual Assembly, and to offer their resources, however modest they may be, for the furthering of its plans and activities.

National Spiritual Assemblies must uphold economy not only because the funds at their disposal are limited but, as experience has repeatedly shown, because lack of proper control and supervision in the expenditure of these funds is both an unfair temptation to the untrustworthy and a test to the body of the believers, causing them to become disenchanted with Bahá'í administration and weakening their resolve to fulfill their sacred obligation of contributing to the Fund.

In the attitudes seen at the National Office, in the appropriations made to committees and other agencies of the National Assembly, in any budgetary assistance given to pioneers and traveling teachers, in the holding of conferences and deepening courses, and in all aspects of the work of the Cause for which the National Assembly is responsible, supervision, careful planning and lack of extravagance should be observed and be seen to be upheld.

Local Spiritual Assemblies

It is becoming increasingly understood by the friends why the Five Year Plan places such great emphasis upon the firmness of the foundation and the efficiency of the operation of the Local Spiritual Assemblies. This is very heartening, for upon the degree to which the members of these Assemblies grasp the true significance of the divine institution on which they serve, arise selflessly to fulfill their prescribed and sacred duties, and persevere in their endeavors, depends to a large extent the healthy growth of the worldwide community of the Most Great Name, the force of its outward thrust, and the strength of its supporting roots.

We long to see every Local Spiritual Assembly either spontaneously adopt its own goals or warmly welcome those it has been or will be given by its National Spiritual Assembly, swell the number of the adherents who compose its local community and, guided by the general policy outlined by its National Spiritual Assembly, proclaim the Faith more effectively, energetically pursue its extension teaching and consolidation goals, arrange the observances of the Holy Days, regularly hold its Nineteen Day Feasts and its sessions for deepening, initiate and maintain community projects, and encourage the participation of every member of its community in giving to the Fund and undertaking teaching activities and administrative services, so as to make each locality a stronghold of the Faith and a torchbearer of the Covenant.

We are confident that the institution of the Boards of Counselors will lend its vital support and, through the Counselors' own contacts with the friends, through their Auxiliary Boards and their assistants, will nourish the roots of each local community, enrich and cultivate the soil of knowledge of the teachings and irrigate it with the living waters of love for Bahá’u’lláh. Thus will the saplings grow into mighty trees, and the trees bear their golden fruit.

Women

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has pointed out that “Among the miracles which distinguish this sacred dispensation is this, that women have evinced a greater boldness than men when enlisted in the ranks of the Faith.” Shoghi Effendi has further stated that this “boldness” must, in the course of time, “be more convincingly demonstrated, and win for the beloved Cause victories more stirring than any it has as yet achieved.” Although obviously the entire Bahá’í world is committed to encouraging and stimulating the vital role of women in the Bahá’í community as well as in society at large, the Five Year Plan calls specifically on eighty National Spiritual Assemblies to organize Bahá’í activities for women. In the course of the current year which has been designated “International Women’s Year” as a worldwide activity of the United Nations, the Bahá’ís, particularly in these eighty national communities, should initiate and implement programs which will stimulate and promote the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of Bahá’í community life, so that through their accomplishments the friends will demonstrate the distinction of the Cause of God in this field of human endeavor.

Youth

It is our hope that in the international travel teaching program now being launched the youth will assume a major role by devoting time during their vacations, and particularly during the long vacation at the end of the academic year, to the promotion of the teaching work in all its aspects, not only within their own national communities but farther afield. Some youth may have financial resources of their own, others may be able and willing to work and save the funds necessary for such projects, still others may have the financial backing of their parents, relatives or friends. In other cases the Bahá’í funds may be able to supplement whatever resources the prospective traveling teacher may be able to supply.

The endurance of youth under arduous conditions, their vitality and vigor, and their ability to adapt themselves to local situations, to meet new challenges, and to impart their warmth and enthusiasm to those they visit, combined with the standard of conduct upheld by Bahá’í youth, make them potent instruments for the execution of the contemplated projects. Indeed, through these distinctive qualities they can become the spearhead of any enterprise and the driving force of any undertaking in which they participate, whether local or national. Our expectant eyes are fixed on Bahá'í youth!

Children

How often have well-organized Bahá'í children's classes given parents, even those who are not Bahá'ís, the incentive to learn more and study more deeply the Teachings of the Faith! How often have the children, through their songs and recitation of prayers during Feasts and at other gatherings of the friends, added luster and inspiration to the program and created a true sense of belonging to the community in the hearts of those present! How many are the children who have grown into active and enkindled youth, and later into wholly dedicated adults, energetically supporting the work of the Cause and advancing its vital interests!

Certain National Spiritual Assemblies have been given the specific goal of organizing children's activities, and many of these Assemblies have been assigned assistance in the form of at least one helper who will have received some training in the education of Bahá'í children. The National Assemblies to receive such helpers, however, should not await their arrival before initiating activities. Through the services of a committee chosen from among those interested in this area of service, simple lessons could be improvised, suitable extracts from the Writings and Prayers chosen for the children to study and memorize, and local talent called upon to carry out this vital activity which will assuredly exert a far-reaching influence on the well-being and strength of each community.

Dawn Prayers

We have been watching with profound interest the manner in which the goal of encouraging the friends to meet for dawn prayers is being carried out. In some rural areas this has become already an established practice of the friends and indeed a source of blessing and benefit to them as they pursue their activities during the day, as well as increasing the consciousness of community solidarity. In other areas, the friends have found that, because of the distances involved, better results are obtained by meeting for prayer in smaller groups. In yet other areas, as a first step, plans have been made to meet for dawn prayers once a week.

May the Blessed Beauty sustain you bountifully as you prepare yourselves to discharge the commitments and surmount the challenges of the year which has just begun.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice] Use of Radio and Television in Teaching

(Extracts from letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi)

In regard to your wish of broadcasting the Message, Shoghi Effendi would advise you to consult with the Spiritual Assembly as to whether such an action meets their approval, and if so to ask their assistance and help for finding the best means through which to carry out your plan. The idea of a wireless station is rather ambitious and requires much financial expenditure. If, however, you find it feasible and within your financial capacity you should not hesitate to do so, inasmuch as this will enable you to spread the Cause in a much easier and more efficient manner.

(13 August 1933 to an individual believer)

Your suggestion regarding the installation of a radio station in the Temple is truly splendid. But it remains to be seen whether the National Spiritual Assembly finds it financially feasible to undertake such a project, which is, beyond doubt, a very costly enterprise. Whatever the expenditure involved in this project, there is no reason why the believers should not start now considering seriously the possibility of such a plan, which, when carried out and perfected, can lend an unprecedented impetus to the expansion of the teaching work throughout America.

It is for the National Spiritual Assembly, however, to take the final decision in this matter, and to determine whether the national fund of the Cause is at present sufficiently strong to permit them to install a radio station in the Temple.

The Guardian feels, nevertheless, confident that this plan will receive the careful consideration of the National Spiritual Assembly members, and hopes that, if feasible, they will take some definite action in this matter.

(31 January 1937 to an individual believer)

He read with interest the various suggestions you made to the National Spiritual Assembly, and feels they are fundamentally sound, especially the wider use of the radio. Unfortunately at the present time anything that would make a fresh demand on the financial resources of the Cause in America—such as a Bahá'í-owned broadcasting station—is out of the question, as the friends are finding it difficult to meet the great needs of the teaching and Temple Funds. However the idea should, he feels, be kept in mind for future realization.

(14 October 1942 to an individual believer)

In connection with the radio work … he would suggest that the main consideration is to bring to the attention of the public the fact that the Faith exists, and its teachings. Every kind of broadcast, whether of passages from the Writings, or on topical subjects, or lectures, should be used. The people need to hear the word "Bahá'í" so that they can, if receptive, respond and seek the Cause out. The primary duty of the friends everywhere in the world is to let the people know such a Revelation is in existence; their next duty is to teach it.

(24 July 1943 to an individual believer)

He feels it would be excellent if the Cause could be introduced more to the people through the medium of radio, as it reaches the masses, especially those who do not take an interest in lectures or attend any type of meeting.

(7 March 1945 to an individual believer)

The matter of obtaining free time on the radio is one which the Radio Committee and the National Spiritual Assembly must decide upon: but the principle is that every effort should be made to present the teachings over the air as often as possible as long as the manner in which it is done is compatible with the dignity of our beloved Faith.

(15 August 1945 to an individual believer)

He was sorry to learn through your cable that the project for a Bahá'í radio station can not be carried out at present; he considers that such a station would be a very great asset to the Cause, not only as a teaching medium and a wonderful form of publicity, but also as an enhancement of its prestige. He feels your Assembly should not drop the matter, but go on investigating ways to make such a project materialize as soon as possible.

(20 March 1946 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

He hopes that a Bahá'í radio station will prove feasible during the coming years, as he considers it of great importance.

(4 May 1946 to the Radio Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

The Bahá'ís should not always be the last to take up new and obviously excellent methods, but rather the first, as this agrees with the dynamic nature of the Faith which is not only progressive, but holds within itself the seeds of an entirely new culture and civilization.

(5 May 1946 to an individual believer)

The Guardian approves in principle of a radio station, and sees no objection to its being in the Temple; but he considers the cost you quote too much of a burden at the present time for the Fund to bear, in view of the multiple expenses of the new Seven Year Plan. If there is any way it can be done for a price you feel the Fund could pay, and which would be more reasonable, he approves of your doing it. In any case the National Spiritual Assembly should strongly press for recognition as a Religious Body, and claim full rights to be represented on the air on an equal footing with other established Churches.

(20 July 1946 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

He approves of your desire to teach the principles of the Faith through radio. But he urges you to do all you can to always, however small the reference you are able to make to it may be, clearly identify or associate what you are giving out with Bahá'u'lláh. The time is too short now for us Bahá'ís to be able to first educate humanity and then tell it that the Source is this new World Faith. For their own spiritual protection people must hear of the name Bahá'í—then, if they turn blindly away, they cannot excuse themselves by saying they never even knew it existed! For dark days seem still ahead of the world, and outside of this Divine Refuge the people will not, we firmly believe, find inner conviction, peace and security. So they have a right to at least hear of the Cause as such!

(24 April 1949 to an individual believer)

Comments

MAY 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1999, THE UHJ WROTE ALL NSAS "THE LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE REQUIRED FROM THE BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL FUND IS RISING SHARPLY" BEYOND "THE NEED EXPRESSED IN ITS 20 JUNE 1995 LETTER TO YOU FOR THE CONTRIBUTION OF TEN MILLION DOLLARS EACH YEAR ..." FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARC.

May 25. On this date in 1999, the Universal House of Justice wrote all National Spiritual Assemblies "the level of expenditure required from the Bahá'í International Fund is rising sharply" beyond "the need expressed in its 20 June 1995 letter to you for the contribution of ten million dollars each year until the end of the century" for the construction of the Arc.

Increased Need for Contributions to the Bahá'í International Fund

25 MAY 1999

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

303.1 With the Four Year Plan proceeding rapidly toward its conclusion, the Universal House of Justice has decided that it is necessary to provide you with information about the international funds of the Faith. We have been asked to convey the following.

303.2 As a result of the sacrificial contributions from believers everywhere for over a decade, the vast construction project on Mount Carmel is moving toward conclusion with unprecedented speed. **The House of Justice is confident that Bahá'ís throughout the world will continue to meet the need expressed in its 20 June 1995 letter to you for the contribution of ten million dollars each year until the end of the century.[1]**

303.3 A new challenge has emerged as a result of the progress of the Faith both at the World Center and throughout the planet. **It is becoming evident that the level of expenditure required from the Bahá'í International Fund is rising sharply,** due to a combination of the following factors. The Edifices and Terraces on Mount Carmel must be maintained at a standard appropriate to their character and the dignity of the Faith; measures must also be instituted to handle, in an appropriate manner, the greatly increased number of people expected to visit the Terraces and to provide protection from damage.

The emergence of the World Administrative Center on the Mountain of God in all its splendor is attracting increased attention to the Faith, and thus creating new opportunities for extension of the influence of the Cause. The achievements of the energetic and dedicated prosecutors of the Four Year Plan in all parts of the planet, establishing new institutions of the Faith and increasing its human resources, have raised the tempo of the administrative activity at the World Center, and call for the assignment of more resources to ensure that its work is carried out efficiently and with dispatch. The need for property acquisition in both Haifa and 'Akká areas to safeguard the serenity of the environs of the Holy Places, to which reference has been made in an earlier letter, remains pressing as the process of urban development in this area accelerates.

303.4 The House of Justice draws your attention to the necessity for increased support of the Bahá'í Fund at an international level with full confidence that the impressive record of sacrificial endeavor by the believers will be sustained in their response to the situation described here. The formulation of budgets at a national and local level should be carried out in the light of these conditions. Above all there should be no interruption to your sustained effort to assist the friends in your area to acquire a deeper understanding of the spiritual obligation binding upon all, irrespective of their circumstances, to contribute to the Funds of the Faith. In particular, those believers who have been blessed with material resources beyond those necessary for their essential needs should ponder deeply the responsibilities resting upon them at this time when the requirements of the Cause are so pressing.

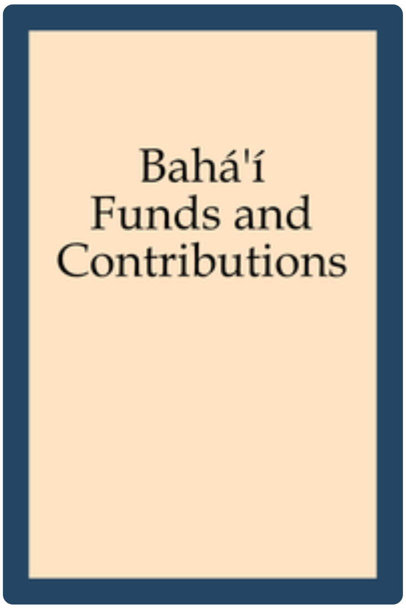
303.5 The prayers of the Universal House of Justice will be offered at the Holy Shrines for the confirmation of their endeavors to assist in the advancement of the Faith.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

FOR DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Notes

1. See no. 204, pp. 445-46.


Bahá'í
Funds and
Contributions

Comments

> Original Index: 1415 | Current Position: 169

MAY 25. ON THIS DATE IN 1975, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO ALL NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES STATING "EVERY INSTITUTION OF THIS DIVINELY CREATED ORDER IS ONE MORE REFUGE FOR A DISTRAUGHT POPULACE."

May 25. On this date in 1975, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies stating "Every institution of this divinely created Order is one more refuge for a distraught populace."

1102. Every Institution of This Divinely Created Order is One More Refuge for a Tottering Society

"Every institution of this divinely created Order is one more refuge for a distraught populace; every soul illumined by the light of the sacred Message is one more link in the oneness of mankind, one more servant ministering to the needs of an ailing world. Even should the Bahá'í communities, in the years immediately ahead, be cut off from the World Centre or from one another--as some have already been--the Bahá'ís will neither halt nor hesitate; they will continue to pursue their objectives, guided by their Spiritual Assemblies, and led by the Counsellors, the members of the Auxiliary Boards and their assistants..."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, May 25, 1975)

Comments

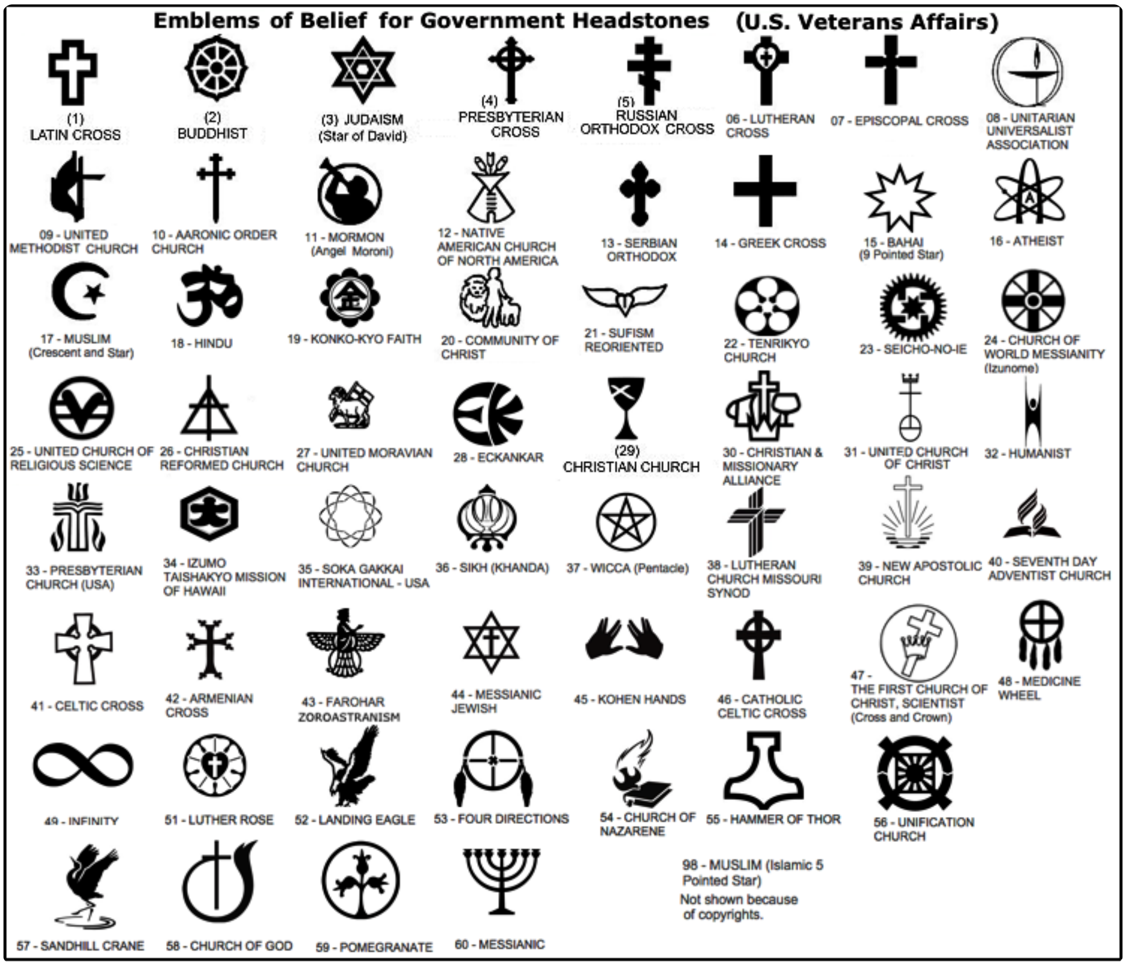
MAY 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1982, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "TO CONTINUE THE PRACTICE OF ABROGATED OBSERVANCES OF PREVIOUS DISPENSATIONS AND THUS UNDERMINE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND CREATE UNDESIRABLE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THEIR FELLOW-BAHÁ'ÍS...."

May 26. On this date in 1982, the Universal House of Justice wrote "to continue the practice of abrogated observances of previous dispensations and thus undermine the independence of the Bahá'í Faith and create undesirable distinctions between themselves and their fellow-Bahá'ís...."

464. Bahá'ís May and Should Participate in Harmless Cultural, Traditional Observances

"In deciding whether or not to participate in such traditional activities, the Bahá'ís must guard against two extremes. The one is to disassociate themselves needlessly from harmless cultural observances and thus alienate themselves from their non-Bahá'í families and friends; the other is to continue the practice of abrogated observances of previous dispensations and thus undermine the independence of the Bahá'í Faith and create undesirable distinctions between themselves and their fellow-Bahá'ís...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia, May 26, 1982)


Emblems of Belief for Government Headstones (U.S. Veterans Affairs)
(1) LATIN CROSS
(2) BUDDHIST
(3) JUDAISM (Star of David)
(4) PRESBYTERIAN CROSS
(5) RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CROSS
06 - LUTHERAN CROSS
07 - EPISCOPAL CROSS
08 - UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
09 - UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
10 - AARONIC ORDER CHURCH
11 - MORMON (Angel Moroni)
12 - NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA
13 - SERBIAN ORTHODOX
14 - GREEK CROSS
15 - BAHAI (9 Pointed Star)
16 - ATHEIST
17 - MUSLIM (Crescent and Star)
18 - HINDU
19 - KONKO-KYO FAITH
20 - COMMUNITY OF CHRIST
21 - SUFISM REORIENTED
22 - TENRIKYO CHURCH
23 - SEICHO-NO-IE
24 - CHURCH OF WORLD MESSIANITY (Izunome)
25 - UNITED CHURCH OF RELIGIOUS SCIENCE
26 - CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
27 - UNITED MORAVIAN CHURCH
28 - ECKANKAR
(29) CHRISTIAN CHURCH
30 - CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE
31 - UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
32 - HUMANIST
33 - PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)
34 - IZUMO TAISHAKYO MISSION OF HAWAII
35 - SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL - USA
36 - SIKH (KHANDA)
37 - WICCA (Pentacle)
38 - LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI SYNOD
39 - NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
40 - SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
41 - CELTIC CROSS
42 - ARMENIAN CROSS
43 - FAROHAR ZOROASTRANISM
44 - MESSIANIC JEWISH
45 - KOHEN HANDS
46 - CATHOLIC CELTIC CROSS
47 - THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST (Cross and Crown)
48 - MEDICINE WHEEL
49 - INFINITY
51 - LUTHER ROSE
52 - LANDING EAGLE
53 - FOUR DIRECTIONS
54 - CHURCH OF NAZARENE
55 - HAMMER OF THOR
56 - UNIFICATION CHURCH
98 - MUSLIM (Islamic 5 Pointed Star)
Not shown because of copyrights.
57 - SANDHILL CRANE
58 - CHURCH OF GOD
59 - POMEGRANATE
60 - MESSIANIC

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 26, 1943, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN LIKE YOU HAVE A LOT OF WONDERFUL WORK TO DO FOR OTHERS IN THE FUTURE. BUT YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL YOU GROW UP, YOU CAN HELP YOUR DEAR MOTHER TEACH THE CAUSE TO OTHERS RIGHT NOW, AND ALSO TELL YOUR PLAYMATES ABOUT IT."

May 26. On this date in 1943, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi wrote "He feels that Bahá'í children like you have a lot of wonderful work to do for others in the future. But you don't even have to wait until you grow up, you can help your dear Mother teach the Cause to others right now, and also tell your playmates about it."

26 May 1943

To an individual believer

Dear little Bahá'í Sister:

Your little letter to the Guardian pleased him very much, and he has told me to answer you on his behalf.

He feels that Bahá'í children like you have a lot of wonderful work to do for others in the future. But you don't even have to wait until you grow up, you can help your dear Mother teach the Cause to others right now, and also tell your playmates about it.

The Guardian is going to pray that you may grow up to be a shining light in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

With love to you,

In His service,

R. Rabbani

May the Beloved bless, protect and guide you and enable you to serve His Faith in the days to come,

Your true brother,

Shoghi

Comments

MAY 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1971, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE A "CLARIFICATION OF THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE IN VIEW OF THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF THE CAUSE OF THE EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN."

May 26. On this date in 1971, the Universal House of Justice wrote a "clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women."

2073. Clarification Exclusion of Women on House of Justice

"Your letter of March 26th, 1971 asking for clarification of the exclusion of women from membership in the Universal House of Justice in view of the great principle of the Cause of the equality of men and women has been received and we offer you the following comments.

"In a Tablet to an early woman believer Abdu'l-Bahá stated: 'O maidservant of God! Know thou that in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men... From the spiritual point of view ... there is no difference between women and men...' He added, however: 'As to the House of Justice: according to the explicit text of the Law of God, its membership is exclusively reserved to men. There is divine wisdom in this which will presently be made manifest even as the mid-day sun.'

"The beloved Guardian in reply to the same query from a believer pointed out in a letter written on his behalf on July 15th 1947: 'People must just accept the fact that women are not eligible to the International House of Justice. As the Master says the wisdom of this will be known in the future, we can only accept, believing it is right, but not able to give an explanation calculated to silence an ardent feminist!'

"We must have faith in the Supreme Manifestation of God and His Exemplar, Whose prescience is revealed in such provisions which will one day 'be made manifest even as the mid-day sun.'"

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 26, 1971)

On March 16, 1901, the nascent Chicago Bahá'í community selected a ten-member Board of Council. Neither Ibrahim George Kheiralla nor any of his supporters were selected to serve on the Board.

On May 15, 1901, the Chicago Bahá'ís elected a nine-man Board of Council for a term of five years.

On May 20, 1901, the number of members on the Board of Council was raised to 12. On May 24, 1901, the name of the Chicago Board of Council was changed to the House of Justice.

One year later, on May 10, 1902, on the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the all-male Chicago House of Justice changed its name to the House of Spirituality. The body remained all-male. The Chicago House of Spirituality was complemented by the Women's Assembly of Teaching.

On March 7, 1903, the House of Spirituality in Chicago, upon hearing from Mírzá Asadu'llah Fádil Mázandarání of the construction of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Ashgabat, wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of their decision to build a House of Worship for Chicago.

In 1909, at the first American Bahá'í National Convention in Chicago, Bahá'í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. Women are allowed to serve on this body. A constitution was framed and an Executive Board of the Bahá'í Temple Unity elected.

In 1922, on the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Temple Unity was renamed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada.

On February 25, 1902, Corinne True wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá about the exclusion of women from the Chicago Bahá'í governing body, Chicago House of Justice, noting that "many" felt it should be a "mixed board" because "women in America stand so conspicuously for all that is highest & best in every department." In his response 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that while "in the sight of God, the conduct of women is the same as that of men" and there was "no difference" between the sexes, nevertheless the "House of Justice" had to consist only of men and that the "reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday." True accepted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ruling–which also affirmed the equality of the sexes–and poured her energy into the Chicago Bahá'í women's organization, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá highly praised. For the next eight years Chicago had two parallel Bahá'í organizations, one confined to men, the other to women.

On November 30, 1930, Shoghi Effendi wrote "In fact Bahá’u’lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá’ís will eventually evolve."

Regarding the question raised in your letter, Shoghi Effendi believes that for the present the Movement, whether in the East or the West, should be dissociated entirely from politics. This was the explicit injunction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. . . . Eventually, however, as you have rightly conceived it, the Movement will, as soon as it is fully developed and recognized, embrace both religious and political issues. In fact Bahá’u’lláh clearly states that affairs of state as well as religious questions are to be referred to the Houses of Justice into which the Assemblies of the Bahá’ís will eventually evolve."

(30 November 1930)

On October 5, 1950, Shoghi Effendi wrote that "the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice."

270. Assembly is a Nascent House of Justice--Individuals Toward Each Other Governed by Love, Unity, etc.

"...There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because **the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice** and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: Living the Life, p. 17)

When today's Local and National Spiritual Assemblies become local and national Houses of Justice, their membership will once again become exclusively male.

TWELFTH INTERNATIONA

Comments

MAY 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, SHOGHI EFFENDI CALLED ON BELIEVERS OF THE "NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT, RECOGNIZED STRONGHOLD OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE FAITH, AND THOSE RESIDING IN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND EMPIRE, SITUATED IN THE HEART, THE EAST AND WEST OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ...."

May 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi addressed a cablegram "to The Bahá'í World" wherein he calls on believers of the "North American continent, recognized stronghold of the administrative order of the Faith, and those residing in the British Commonwealth and Empire, situated in the heart, the East and West of the African continent, scattered throughout the Antipodes and Pacific area, to arise promptly and accelerate the tempo of their activities."

Implications and Requirements

Impelled at this grave hour in the chequered history of the over century-old, world-encompassing, repeatedly-persecuted yet undefeatable Faith, to summon the entire body of the valorous upholders of its institutions who, severally and collectively, stand pledged to the prosecution of the mightiest crusade launched since its inception, whether residing in homelands or overseas, however repressive the regimes under which they labor, to ponder anew the full implications and essential requirements of their stewardship of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

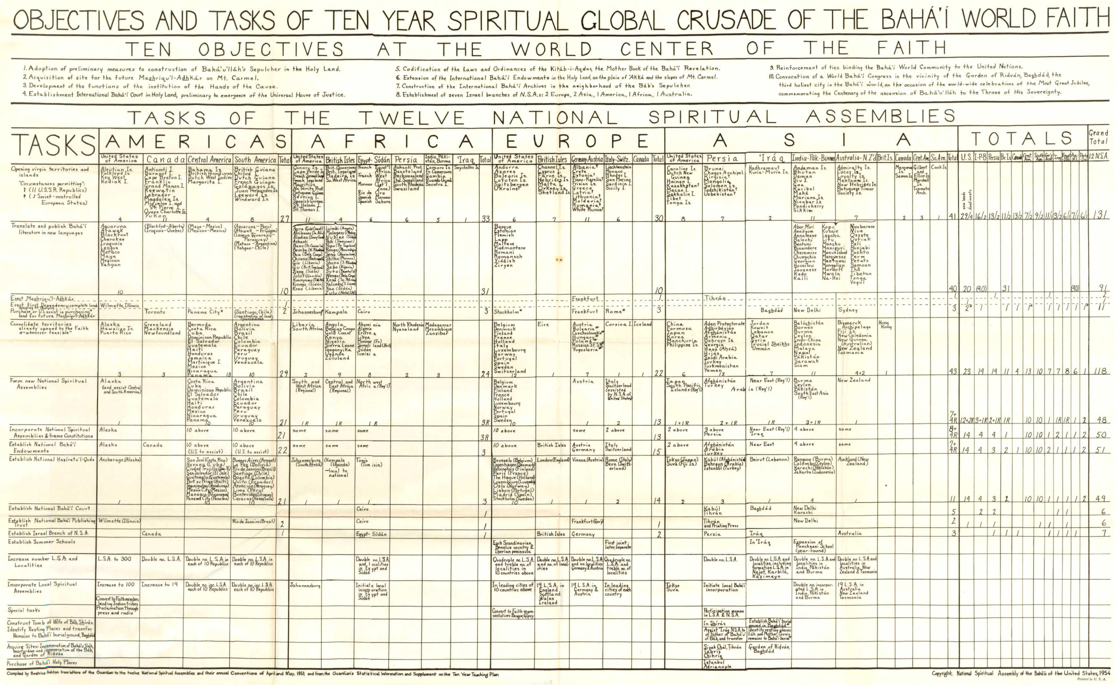
Entreat them to refuse to allow any vicissitudes, present or future, to dampen their ardor and enthusiasm, impair their solidarity, weaken their resolution, or deflect them from their high purpose. Unbowed by adversity, disdainful of the clamors, undeterred by the machinations of the inveterate, artful, traditional enemies who are alarmed by their own declining fortunes, contrasting with the evidence of the dynamic force, impelling power, rising prestige, indivisible unity, accumulating resources, multiplying institutions and inextinguishable spirit of God's infant Faith, it behoveth them to bend their energies, rise to higher levels of consecration, vigilantly combat all forms of misrepresentations, eradicate suspicions, dispel misgivings, silence criticisms, through still more compelling demonstration of loyalty to their respective governments, win, maintain and strengthen the confidence of the civil authorities in their integrity and sincerity, reaffirm the universality of the aims and purposes of the Faith, proclaim the spiritual character of its fundamental principles, and assert the non-political character of its administrative institutions.

Appeal to members of communities untrammeled by the disabilities and shackles imposed on their less privileged brethren, particularly those established in the North American continent, recognized stronghold of the administrative order of the Faith, and those residing in the British Commonwealth and Empire, situated in the heart, the East and West of the African continent, scattered throughout the Antipodes and Pacific area, to arise promptly and accelerate the tempo of their activities, multiply exploits which will more than offset the transient setbacks which a steadily-advancing and as yet not fully-emancipated Faith may suffer. Theirs is the sublime opportunity so to act as to thoroughly dishearten and confound any schemes which envious, fanatical and embittered adversaries, tottering to their fall, may devise.

Share message with National Assemblies.

--*Shoghi*

[Cablegram, May 26, 1955]



OBJECTIVES AND TASKS OF TEN YEAR SPIRITUAL GLOBAL CRUSADE OF THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD FAITH

TEN OBJECTIVES AT THE WORLD CENTER OF THE FAITH

1. Adoption of preliminary measures to construction of Bahá'u'lláh's Sepulcher in the Holy Land.
2. Acquisition of site for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár on Mt. Carmel.
3. Development of the functions of the institution of the Hands of the Cause.
4. Establishment International Bahá'í Court in Holy Land, preliminary to emergence of the Universal House of Justice.
5. Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of the Bahá'í Revelation.
6. Extension of the International Bahá'í Endowments in the Holy Land, on the plain of 'Akká and the slopes of Mt. Carmel.
7. Construction of the International Bahá'í Archives in the neighborhood of the Báb's Sepulcher.
8. Establishment of seven Israel branches of N.S.A.s: 2 Europe, 2 Asia, 1 America, 1 Africa, 1 Australia.
9. Reinforcement of ties binding the Bahá'í World Community to the United Nations.
10. Convocation of a World Bahá'í Congress in the vicinity of the Garden of Riḍván, Baghdád, the third holiest city in the Bahá'í world, on the occasion of the world-wide celebrations of the Most Great Jubilee, commemorating the Centenary of the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh to the Throne of His Sovereignty.

TASKS OF THE TWELVE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

Compiled by Beatrice Ashton from letters of the Guardian to the twelve National Spiritual Assemblies and their annual Conventions of April and May, 1953, and from the Guardian's Statistical Information and Supplement on the Ten Year Teaching Plan

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Comments

MAY 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, SHOGHI EFFENDI, RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM AND LEROY IOAS VISIT PRESIDENT BEN ZVI IN JERUSALEM, RECIPROCATING HIS VISIT OF APRIL 26 TO HOUSE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN HAIFA.

May 26. On this date in 1954, Shoghi Effendi, Rúhíyyih Khánum and Leroy Ioas visited the President of Israel Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. On April 26, 1954, Shoghi Effendi had received the President of Israel Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and his wife Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi at the the House of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa. In the chapter titled *The Heart and Nerve Centre* in her book *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith* , Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum describes this meeting...

In January 1949 Mr. Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy , as Mr. Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.

The interview took place on Friday evening, January 21st, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt. Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion enquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book God Passes By — which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks. Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on December 20, 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On January 28, 1949, there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed "Bahai U.N. Observer", which flatly refuted the article and asserted, "Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader" and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information

As there was no such thing as a "Bahai U.N. Observer" this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahji brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to content.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once-for-all the walls of the prison-city of 'Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on December 16, 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated December 13, 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

"...I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.

In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith."

The victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahji. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue it was removed by Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff — two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952. His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani,

World Head of the Bahá'í Faith,

Haifa. Your Eminence, I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister. As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem. May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, as we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group? The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

S. Eynath

Legal Adviser

The second letter was from Walter Eytan, Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and was written to Shoghi Effendi the following day. In it he says: "...Having done my best throughout to be of assistance to Your Eminence in the solution of these vexing problems, I heard with great satisfaction this morning that complete agreement had been reached. I sincerely trust that this puts an end to a period of anxiety for Your Eminence and the members of the Bahá'í Faith, and that you will now be able to proceed with your plans without further interference from any quarter."

It is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of April 26, 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the President and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt. Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and it constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Bab, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his

European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi we all withdrew and walked about he gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On April 29th the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine... I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On May 5th the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: "...It was a great pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel... If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem..." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of May 26th and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on June 3rd to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi..." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.

LETTER FROM HAIFA

DEFINES "AGES"

AND "EPOCHS"

In a letter dated January 18, 1953,

written on behalf of the Guardian by

Leroy Ioas, Assistant Secretary, the

terms "age" and "epoch" as used by the Guardian are defined.

"The Faith is divided into three Ages, the Heroic. the Formative, the Golden Age, as has been outlined in his writings. The Heroic Age closed with the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The Formative Age is divided into epochs. The first epoch lasted 25 years. We are now actually in the second epoch of the Formative Age. How long the Formative Age will last is not known - and there will probably be a number of epochs in it.

"The Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Baha is divided into epochs. The first Seven Year Plan constituted the first stage of the first epoch; the second Seven Year Plan constitutes the second stage; while the ten year Crusade will constitute the third stage of the first epoch of the Divine Plan. The first epoch of the Divine Plan will conclude with the conclusion of the ten year Crusade."

-NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Comments

MAY 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1955, SHOGHI EFFENDI ANNOUNCED THE DEATH OF "MAJDI'D-DÍN, THE MOST REDOUBTABLE ADVERSARY OF `ABDU'L-BAHÁ, DENOUNCED BY HIM AS THE INCARNATION OF SATAN...WHO ABOVE SIXTY YEARS LABORED WITH FIENDISH INGENUITY AND GUILE TO UNDERMINE ITS FOUNDATIONS, MISERABLY PERISHED ...."

May 26. On this date in 1955, Shoghi Effendi announced the death of "Majdi'd-Dín, the most redoubtable adversary of `Abdu'l-Bahá, denounced by Him as the incarnation of Satan...who above sixty years labored with fiendish ingenuity and guile to undermine its foundations, miserably perished struck with paralysis affecting his limbs and tongue. Dispensation of Providence prolonged the span of his infamous life to a hundred years."

Majdi'd-Dín was the son of Bahá'u'lláh's full brother Áqáy-i-Kalím, also known as Mirzá Musa, and was married to Samadiyyih, Bahá'u'lláh's daughter from his second wife Fatimih Khanum, who Bahá'u'lláh titled Mahd-i-'Ulya. Both Majdi'd-Dín and Samadiyyih were eventually declared Covenant-breakers.

[Cablegram, May 26, 1955]

Archbreaker of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant

Announce to National Assemblies that Majdi'd-Dín, the most redoubtable adversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, denounced by Him as the incarnation of Satan and who played a predominant part in kindling the hostility of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd and Jamál Páshá, and who was the chief instigator of Covenant-breaking and archbreaker of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, and who above sixty years labored with fiendish ingenuity and guile to undermine its foundations, miserably perished struck with paralysis affecting his limbs and tongue. Dispensation of Providence prolonged the span of his infamous life to a hundred years, enabling him to witness the extinction of his cherished hopes and the disintegration with dramatic rapidity of the infernal crew he unceasingly incited and zealously directed, and the triumphant progress and glorious termination of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's thirty-year ministry as well as evidences of the rise and establishment in all continents of the globe of the administrative order, child of the divinely-appointed Covenant and harbinger of the world-encircling order.

--Shoghi

Comments

MAY 26. ON THIS DATE IN 1950, SINGAPORE WAS OPENED TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH WITH THE ARRIVAL OF PIONEER KHODADAD FOZDAR, WHO IN 1953 WAS NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

May 26. On this date in 1950, Singapore was opened to the Bahá'í Faith with the arrival of pioneer Khodadad Fozdar, who in 1953 was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Andaman Islands.

Khodadad Fozdar was born in 1898. He was of Parsi-Zoroastrian descent.

Khodadad married Shirin in 1925, she was already a Bahá'í and he declared soon after the marriage, which resulted in his alienation from his mother and other family members. In 1928 he was appointed the Medical Officer of India's State Railways. In 1935 he visited Europe, and both he and Shirin went on Pilgrimage to the Holy Land on their way back to India. He taught some people about the Faith while travelling to Palestine who decided they would also meet with Shoghi Effendi, and the Guardian assured the Fozdar's that they were protected by God.

In the 1930's Dr. Fozdar was working at a hospital in Ajmer. In January 1938 Khodadad and Shirin visited Colombo, Sri Lanka, with Martha Root for ten days. The Fozdar's spoke at a local Parsi club. Shirin continued with Martha onto Mysore and Bangalore while Khodadad returned to Ajmer.

He left his position with the Railway company in 1950 and he and Shirin pioneered to Singapore, then apart of Malaya, and he opened a medical practice. He also worked at the General Hospital at Johore Bahru while living in Singapore, and he and Shirin later established a free school for underprivileged women.

They began a teaching campaign and Shirin delivered talks for several women's organizations. Their son, John Fozdar, joined them in Singapore upon the completion of his medical degree. Travel throughout Malaya was restricted when they first arrived, but in 1953 Shirin was able to give talks in Malacca, Seremban and Kuala Lumpur.

On November 24, 1953, Dr. Fozdar pioneered to the Andaman Islands, fulfilling a goal of the Ten Year Crusade set by Shoghi Effendi, for which he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Four people became Bahá'ís in the Andamans due to Khodadad's efforts, however he had to return to Singapore after only four months as he was not able to secure permission to remain in the territory. He pioneered within Malaya to Malacca after returning. On December 26, his son Minoo Fozdar arrived to the Nicobar Islands, for which he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1957 both Dr. Fozdar and Shirin were elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of South East Asia at the first South East Asia Convention held in Djakarta, Indonesia. Fozdar Khodad was survived by his wife; three sons. Jamshed, John, and Minoo; and two daughters.

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 27, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "BAHÁ'ÍS...TO DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO...FOREIGN STUDENTS BELONGING TO THE BLACK, YELLOW AND BROWN RACES...CONFIRM BAHÁ'ÍS WHO MAY GO BACK TO THE DISTANT PLACE OF THE EARTH--THE PACIFIC, AFRICA, ASIA, ETC.,...HELP TO THE NEWLY-BORN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES."

May 27. On this date in 1957, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Bahá'ís, wherever they may be, to devote more attention to the minorities. This is particularly true in places where there are universities where foreign students belonging to the black, yellow and brown races are studying" and "confirm Bahá'ís who may go back to the distant place of the earth--the Pacific, Africa, Asia, etc., and be of inestimable help to the newly-born Bahá'í Communities."

1806. Teaching Multi-Racial Students in the Universities and Other Minority Groups in America, Such as Czechs, Poles, Russians...

"...urge the Bahá'ís, wherever they may be, to devote more attention to the minorities. This is particularly true in places where there are universities where foreign students belonging to the black, yellow and brown races are studying. In this way, the friends cannot only obey one of the most beautiful principles of our Faith, to show hospitality to the stranger in our midst, but also demonstrate the universality of our Teachings and the true brotherhood that animates us, and in addition, confirm Bahá'ís who may go back to the distant place of the earth--the Pacific, Africa, Asia, etc., and be of inestimable help to the newly-born Bahá'í Communities.

"Likewise the friends should carry their friendship and their teachings to other minority groups in America, such as the Italians, the Jews, the Czechs, the Poles, the Russians, etc."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í Inter-Racial Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, May 27, 1957)

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 27, 1928, ABU'L-HASAN-I-ARDIKÁNÍ (HÁJÍ AMÍN) DIED IN TEHRAN. AN EMINENT FOLLOWER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HE HAD SERVED AS THE TRUSTEE OF HUQÚQU'LLÁH AND WAS POSTHUMOUSLY APPOINTED A HAND OF THE CAUSE OF GOD BY SHOGHI EFFENDI AND IDENTIFIED AS ONE OF THE NINETEEN APOSTLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

May 27. On this date in 1928, Abu'l-Hasan-i-Ardikání (Hájí Amín) died in Tehran. An eminent follower of Bahá'u'lláh, he had served as the trustee of Huqúqu'lláh and was posthumously appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi and identified as one of the nineteen Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh.

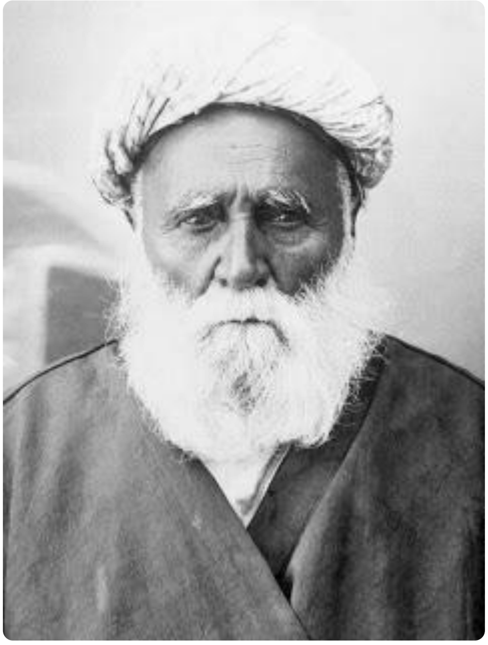
Abu'l-Hasan-i-Ardikání was born around 1817 in the village of Ordlegan (also spelled Ar-dīgān, Ardīkān, Ordīkān, and Urdīgān) near Yazd. At seventeen he married into a family of Bábís.

He would later become a Bahá'í and traveled across Iran to teach the new message. Abu'l-Hasan-i-Ardikání earned his living by trading and writing for the illiterate as he travelled. He was known to collect letters that people wished to forward to Bahá'u'lláh, and also distributed tablets of Bahá'u'lláh where people received them.

He made his way to 'Akká, and became the first Bahá'í from outside of the city to see Bahá'u'lláh, returning on several occasions. When Haji Shah-Muhammad Manshadi was killed in 1880, Amín became the trustee of the Huqúqu'lláh.

Hájí Amín, lived a long life and was Trustee of the Huqúqu'lláh during the ministries of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and during part of the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi.

Abu'l-Hasan-i-Ardikání died on May 27, 1928, in Tehran.



Comments

MAY 27. ON THIS DATE IN 1980, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE REGARDING QUESTIONS ABOUT "REASONS FOR THE DELAY IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE KITAB-I-AQDAS"

May 27. On this date in 1980, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding questions about "reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas"

27 MAY 1980 Extracts from a reply written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to questions about the Kitab-i-Aqdas

The institution of the Covenant has a direct bearing on the implementation of the laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. This Book is the repository of the basic laws for the Dispensation to be implemented gradually in accordance with the guidance given by God through those infallible Institutions which lie at the heart of the Covenant.

Indeed, one of those Institutions, the Universal House of Justice, has been given by Bahá'u'lláh the task not only of applying the laws but of supplementing them and of making laws on all matters not explicitly covered in the Sacred Text. **An English translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas was made by Dr. Earl E. Elder and Dr. William McE. Miller, two men who were Presbyterian missionaries in Persia and have long been strongly antagonistic to the Faith. A great many of the statements that they make about its history are based on the assertions of Covenant-breakers or opponents of the Faith-rather like a history of Christianity based primarily on statements by enemies of Jesus Christ. Dr. Miller, for example, places great reliance on a document called the "Nuqtatu'l-Kaf," which is, in fact, spurious, as is fully demonstrated by the Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi in his book Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith. (See Edward Granville Browne, pp. 62-88.) The Nuqtatul-Kaf - Arabic for "The Point of Kaf" (the letter K)-is a short chronicle of events of the Babi Faith originally written by Haji Mirza Jani, a merchant from Kashan who was martyred in 1852. Mr. Balyuzi explains that it was later tampered with and was denounced as a forgery by Mirza Abu'-Fadl, the preeminent Bahá'í scholar of the East during the Faith's Heroic Age. The Nuqtatu'l-Kaf presents a distorted history of the l3dbi Faith and its doctrines.**

The reasons for the delay in the translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas are given in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification. (Synopsis and Codification, a book published by the Universal House of Justice in 1973 that contains those passages of the Kitab-i-Aqdas that had been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi and a codification of the contents of the Kitab-i-Aqdas and the "Questions and Answers" with explanatory notes. An annotated English translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas was published by the Universal House of Justice at Naw-Ruz 1993.) The Kitab-i-Aqdas itself is the kernel of a vast structure of Bahá'í law that will have to come into being in the years and centuries ahead as the unity of mankind is established and develops. Thus to properly understand the contents of that Book one should also read many other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh relating to them, as well as the interpretations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, and realize that **great areas of detail have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to fill in and to vary in accordance with the needs of a developing society**. For example: The law of divorce in the Aqdas seems to apply only to a husband divorcing his wife, and not vice versa. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian have made it quite clear that the principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitab-i-Aqdas applies equally to men and women, and the law has always been implemented in this way. Such elucidations are one of the specific functions intended by Bahá'u'lláh for the authoritative Interpreter. **The Kitab-i-Aqdas appears to allow bigamy.** This is explained in Note 17 on page 59 of the Synopsis and Codification: "The text of the Kitab-i-Aqdas upholds monogamy, but as it appears also to permit bigamy, the Guardian was asked for a clarification, and in reply his secretary wrote on his behalf. 'Regarding Bahá'í marriage: in the light of the Master's Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, **as 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practiced**.'" This is an authoritative interpretation, and as an interpretation states what is intended by the original text, it is correct to say that the Kitab-i-Aqdas prohibits plurality of wives. **This method of establishing monogamy as the law of the Faith is one example of the process referred to in the introduction to the Synopsis and Codification** whereby there is a progressive disclosure of the full meaning of the laws of the Faith as the Dispensation unfolds. **The punishments prescribed for theft, murder and arson are given only in barest outline. It is explained in Note 42 on page 64 of the Synopsis and Codification that these punishments are intended for a future condition of society and will have to be supplemented and applied by the Universal House of Justice.** The punishment for theft, for example, says that for the third offense **a mark must be placed on the thief's forehead** (nothing is said about branding), so that people will be warned of his proclivities. All details of how the mark is to be applied, how long it must be worn, on what conditions it may be removed, as well as the seriousness of various degrees of theft have been left by Bahá'u'lláh for the Universal House of Justice to decide when the law has to be applied. Similarly, merely the fundamental principles of the punishments for **murder and arson** are given in the Kitab-i-Aqdas. **Willful murder is to be punished either by capital punishment or life imprisonment.** Such matters as degrees of offense and whether any extenuating circumstances are to be taken into account, and which of the two prescribed punishments is to be the norm are left to the Universal House of Justice to decide in light of prevailing conditions when the law is in operation. Arson, as you yourself can see from the newspapers, is becoming an increasingly frequent offense-scarcely a day passes without some building being burned or blown up, often causing agonizing death to innocent people. **Bahá'u'lláh prescribes that a person who burns a house intentionally is to be burned or imprisoned for life,** but again, the application of these punishments, the method of carrying them out and the fixing of degrees of offense are left to the Universal House of Justice. Obviously there is a tremendous difference in the degree of the offense of a person who burns down an empty warehouse from that of one who sets fire to a school full of children.

From the above examples it should be clear why a translation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas made without proper comprehensive footnotes referring to other Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh which elucidate His laws as well as to interpretations made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian, can give a very misleading impression-quite apart from the problem of achieving a beauty of style in the English which can approach that of the original, an aspect in which the Elder-Miller translation falls woefully short.

Although there is no explicit reference to the Guardianship in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Synopsis and Codification lists "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship." On page 214 of God Passes By, when summarizing the contents of the Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that in it Bahá'u'lláh "anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship," and again, on page 147 of The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh the Guardian refers to "the verses of the Kitab-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship." One such implication is in the matter of Huqúqu'lláh [The Right of God; For information on Huququ'llah, see the glossary. See also the letter dated 6 August 1984 (no. 404) introducing Huqúqu'lláh to the West] which is ordained in the Kitab-i-Aqdas without provision being made for who is to receive it; in His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá fills this gap by stating "It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God . . ." Other implications of this institution can be seen in the terms in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá is appointed as the Successor of Bahá'u'lláh and the Interpreter of His Teachings. The faithful are enjoined to turn their faces towards the one whom "God hath purposed" and who "hath branched from this Ancient Root" and are bidden to refer whatsoever they do not understand in the Bahá'í writings to him who "hath branched from this mighty Stock." Yet another can be seen in the provision of the Aqdas concerning the disposition of international endowments a passage which not only refers this matter to the Aghsan (male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh) but also provides for what should happen should the line of Aghsan end before the coming into being of the Universal House of Justice.

Thus the "Anticipation of the Institution of the Guardianship" is correctly included in the Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

On March 5, 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote "... concerning the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas", he does not think that it would be advisable to circulate at present, whether among the friends or in the outside public, any of the existing translations of this book...When completed, this translation should not, the Guardian feels, be printed entirely and circulated among the believers. But only extracts of it should, with the approval of your N.S.A., be brought to the attention of the friends until such time as the publication of the whole book would be deemed advisable."

On December 27, 1941, Shoghi Effendi wrote the NSA of India giving reasons as to why the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is not circulated amongst all the Bahá'ís or translated into their native languages.

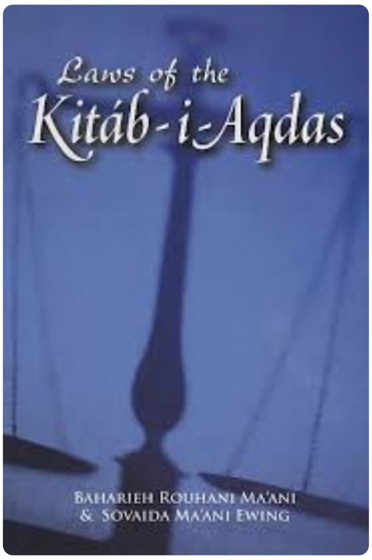
William McElwee Miller and Earl E. Elder's translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1961 as *Al-kitab al-aqdas or The most holy book*, some thirty years before the Bahá'í Administrative Order's authorized translation in 1992.

What I particularly like about the Elder & Miller translation is that it uses contemporary English. The 1992 translation commissioned by Universal House of Justice unnecessarily uses words like "hath," "heareth," "thy," and "ye" in an attempt to mimic the tone of the King James Version of the Bible.

In 1973 a "Synopsis and Codification" of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* was published in English by the Universal House of Justice, with 21 passages of the *Aqdas* that had already been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi with additional terse lists of laws and ordinances contained in the book outside of any contextual prose.

The *Aqdas* was only officially translated into English in 1992, by which time other translations were becoming increasingly available through dissemination via the internet.

My personal opinion is that the material in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* is so objectionable that the Bahá'í authorities wished to shield Western believers from its contents, as they do from Bahá'u'lláh's other works by not providing translations.


Laws of the
Kitáb-i-Aqdas
Baharieh Rouhani Ma'ani
& Sovaida Ma'ani Ewing

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 27, 1925, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE OF "DR. ESSLEMONT...HIS PAST SERVICES, HIS SELFLESSNESS AND DEVOTION, HIS BOOK OF UNSURPASSED EXCELLENCE, HIS NOBLE CHARACTER AND GREAT INDUSTRY ENTITLE HIM TO THE HIGHEST ESTEEM AND WARMEST AFFECTION OF EVERY TRUE BAHÁ'Í..."

May 27. On this date in 1925, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Our well-beloved brother and fellow-worker Dr. Esslemont acting on medical advice is proceeding to the Black Forest for treatment and recuperation...His past services, his selflessness and devotion, his book of unsurpassed excellence, his noble character and great industry entitle him to the highest esteem and warmest affection of every true Bahá'í...I am sure that the German friends who have already learned to love and admire such a precious and capable servant of the Cause will do all in their power to extend to him every facility and ensure his full and speedy recovery."

27 May 1925

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout Germany. My dearly-beloved friends:

Our well-beloved brother and fellow-worker Dr. Esslemont acting on medical advice is proceeding to the Black Forest for treatment and recuperation. He has been suffering of late from ill-health which has interfered with the unique and most valuable work he has been doing in Haifa. **His past services, his selflessness and devotion, his book of unsurpassed excellence, his noble character and great industry entitle him to the highest esteem and warmest affection of every true Bahá'í.**

He has been advised to spend the hot summer months in a dry and cool climate and to secure proper medical treatment in a quiet and restful place. **I am sure that the German friends who have already learned to love and admire such a precious and capable servant of the Cause will do all in their power to extend to him every facility and ensure his full and speedy recovery.**

He will be accompanied by our dear Bahá'í sister, Mrs. Lowell, who is returning to America via Germany and whom you will be glad to welcome in your midst.

Assuring you of my affection and prayers,

I am your brother in His service

Born on May 19, 1874, John Esslemont appears repeatedly at key points in Bahá'í history. For example, at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in Acre on November 28, 1921, Shoghi Effendi was a twenty-four-year-old student enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon reading the telegram announcing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death, in the home of Wellesley Tudor Pole who was Secretary of the London Local Spiritual Assembly, Shoghi Effendi passed out. Only after spending a few days with John Esslemont did Shoghi Effendi leave England, on December 16, 1921, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and his eldest sister, Ruhangiz, who he would later declare a Covenant-breaker.

John Esslemont's book *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* remains an important text that has been used in Bahá'í missionary activity. However, from in its initial publication to later editions, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* has been significantly edited, with references to Avarih removed in subsequent editions published after Avarih's apostasy from the Bahá'í Faith.

Other significant edits include...

Perhaps the most important change in Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era was made on page 212 of the 1923 edition. Recorded as a Bahá'í prophecy (59) concerning the "Coming of the Kingdom of God," Esslemont cited Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the last two verses of the Book of Daniel from the Bible. He stated that the 1335 days spoken of by Daniel represented 1335 solar years from Muhammad's flight to Medina in 622 A.D., which would equal 1957 A.D.. When asked "'What shall we see at the end of the 1335 days?'," Abdu'l-Bahá's reply was: "'Universal Peace will be firmly established, a Universal language promoted. Misunderstandings will pass away. The Bahá'í Cause will be promulgated in all parts and the oneness of mankind established. It will be most glorious!'" (60) In editions published after his death, Esslemont's words have been changed to say that Abdu'l-Bahá "reckoned the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy from the date of the beginning of the Muhammadan era " (61) and one of Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets is quoted on the same subject in which he writes, "'For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth....'" Esslemont appears to conclude that Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the year 1963 and the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's public claim to be a Manifestation of God. (62) These words, however, were never written by the author, but were added posthumously. And, it should be noted that the phrase "'the dawn of the Sun of Truth'" is not a reference to a particular year, in this case 1863, but to a period of years when the Bab and his followers were preparing the way for the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh. Hence, they are commonly referred to as the "Dawn-Breakers." (63) Further, in another quotation which originally appeared on the same page, but was also removed from later editions, Abdu'l-Bahá plainly stated, "' This is the Century of the Sun of Truth. This is the Century of the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth.'" (64) Esslemont recorded Abdu'l-Bahá as declaring explicitly that the prophecy was to be computed from the Hijra or 622 A.D. and that specific conditions would exist in the world upon it's fulfillment in 1957. When it became apparent that this Bahá'í prophecy would not be fulfilled, it was replaced with the ambiguous material which has remained in the text to the present. This is evident from the fact that, although Esslemont's other eyewitness accounts were removed in the 1937 revision, the record of Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy was left intact by the American National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi. It was not changed until after 1957. (65) Also, Abdu'l-Bahá's conviction that all of these events would take place in this century have been expressed in other writings and it is evident that Shoghi Effendi shared his optimism as well. (66)

John Esslemont died in Haifa on November 22, 1925.

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 27, 1927, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE " THE PRACTICE OF NOMINATION, SO DETRIMENTAL TO THE ATMOSPHERE OF A SILENT AND PRAYERFUL ELECTION, IS VIEWED WITH MISTRUST...DENY THAT GOD-GIVEN RIGHT OF EVERY ELECTOR TO VOTE ONLY IN FAVOUR OF THOSE WHO HE IS CONSCIENTIOUSLY CONVINCED..."

May 27. On this date in 1927, Shoghi Effendi wrote the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada "to vote for none but those whom prayer and reflection have inspired him to uphold. Moreover, the practice of nomination, so detrimental to the atmosphere of a silent and prayerful election, is viewed with mistrust, inasmuch as it gives the right ... to deny that God-given right of every elector to vote only in favour of those who he is conscientiously convinced are the most worthy candidates."

39. Prayer and Reflection Before Voting

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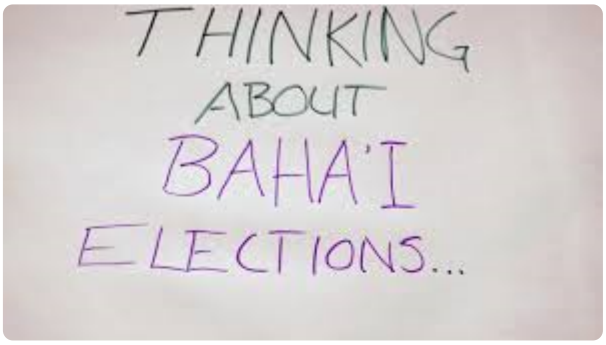
(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, May 27, 1927: Bahá'í Administration, p. 136)

"...in the time of election, the friends should be in the mood of prayer, disinterestedness and detachment from worldly motives. Then they will be inspired to elect the proper members to the assemblies."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 7, 1924)


THINKING
ABOUT
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Comments

MAY 27. ON THIS DATE IN 1910, THE "JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS" PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE "NOT LESS THAN ONE-FIFTH OF THE POPULATION OF PERSIA IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE EMBRACE BAHAISM..NOT A RELIGION, BUT A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT. IF IT WERE A RELIGION ITS CHANCE OF DIFFUSION WOULD PROBABLY BE SMALL...

May 27. On this date in 1910, the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* published an article titled "Persia and the Regeneration of Islam" by Bernard Temple stating "Not less than one-fifth of the population of Persia is estimated to have embrace Bahaism..not a religion, but a religious movement. If it were a religion its chance of diffusion would probably be small...It is, in very brief, the Protestantism of Islam. It comes to inaugurate the Reformation in Asia. Its spirit is anti-papal, anti-episcopal, anti-clerical. The Bab was the John Huss of Persia; Baha Ullah was the Martin Luther...I have never met two men, I have never read two books, whose accounts of Bahai teaching wholly agree. It would not be difficult for me to present to you many different concepts of Bahaism, gathered in my travel, each resting on authority."

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...

You have only to consider that the Muhammadan converts to Bahaism number more than two million and the non-Muhammadan converts only a few thousand to perceive the strength of the statement. The Bahai dream of a world-wide propaganda is doubtless a proper, and may even be a reasonable, object of aspiration and endeavor. My concern here is with what is actually being accomplished.

...

Bahais seems to reconcile the spiritual and temporal authorities in Islam by showing that each is a necessary adjunct of the other : the Church performs the religious functions of the State; the State discharges the Civil obligations of the Church.

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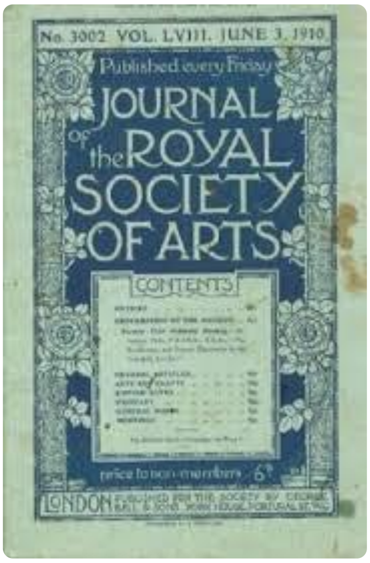

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Comments

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On June 17, 1850, the governor of Nayríz called a truce with Vahíd , and Vahíd left the fort of Khájih to meet the governor in his siege camp. On June 21, Vahíd signed a document informing the Bábís that an agreement had been reached, and that they could leave the fort. The Bábís were killed after leaving the fort.

Vahíd was beheaded in Nayríz on June 29, 1850, and his body was dragged through the streets.

Later, in March 1853, the governor of the city was killed by Bábís, leading to a second armed conflict near the city where the Bábís once again resisted troop attacks until November 1853, when a massacre of Bábís happened.

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C.8. Mirza Yusuf Vahid Kashfi:

A nephew of Vahid Darabi deserves special mention as standing among the most eminent Baha'is of his age. Mirza Yusuf was born a decade and half after the martyrdom of his renowned uncle in the year 1281 A.H./1864 in Istahbanat as the youngest of the eight children (six boys and two girls) of Jahan Bagum and Haji Muhammad-Isma`il. Both his father and grandfather, Haji Muhammad-Taqi, originally of Lar, were merchants of note whose trading activities spread to the surrounding regions. Jahan Bagum was born and raised in Istahbanat and together with her husband had become a firm believer in course of Vahid's first visit.

From early childhood signs of unusual intellect and remarkable faculty coupled with well-pleasing nature were evident in Mirza Yusuf and soon he excelled in all his early studies. Occasionally during this period he journeyed to Nayriz, visiting his sister and her family, and once traveled to Mashhad with his maternal uncle, Siyyid Mustafa.

At the age of sixteen he was sent to Shiraz to complete his education under the supervision of one of his father's relations in Aqa Baba-Khan school and soon he mastered such branches of learning as Arabic grammar, logic, principles of speech, and wisdom. After a while he also enrolled in the Qavam School where he studied the basics of the philosophy of Mulla Sadra under the tutelage of Mirza Abbas Hakim, one of the foremost students of the celebrated Haji Mulla Hadi Sabzivari. It was there in 1298 A.H./ 1880 that he befriended the renowned Aqa Shaykh Ibrahim Burazjani, known as Fadil Shirazi, and was first introduced to the Faith and learned the details associated with his illustrious maternal uncle, though he continued to remain identified with the religion of his birth.

For his advance studies in the various branches of Islamic sciences he left Shiraz for Yazd where he remained for two years and enrolled in the Khan school. This stay afforded him the opportunity to deepen his knowledge of the Cause through associations with his cousin, Siyyid Ahmad (a son of Vahid) and a resident of the same town. Frequently he also visited Haji Mirza Muhammad-Taqi, the Vakilu'd-Dawlih, from whom he learned many details about the religion of the Bab.

Subsequently, he traveled to Isfahan, visiting his two maternal uncles, Siyyid Sina and Siyyid 'Isa, and from there to Burujird where another maternal uncle, Siyyid Rayhanu'llah, the youngest brother of Vahid Darabi, had succeeded his father and had acquired the rank of the Hujjatu'l-Islam. He stayed in that town for some six months and benefited from the classes of his uncle at whose encouragement, he traveled to Karbala and for the next two years undertook tuition under such renowned scholars as Aqa Shaykh Zaynu'l-'Abidin Mazandarani, Haji Mirza Habibu'llah Rashti and Haji Siyyid Husayn Turk. A portion of this time he was enrolled in the classes of various divines in Najaf, such as, Haji Shaykh Muhammad, Fadil Irvani and Shaykh Hadi Najm-Abadi.

Upon completion of his studies, he returned to the native town of the family in Darab, but finding its intellectual environment too stifling, he left after a week for Kirman and Yazd. In was in the former city where he met his cousin, Siyyid Muhammad, who had accompanied Vahid on the historic journey to Nayriz, and from this cousin learned much more about the Faith. Though in the course of his conversations he was unable to attain certitude, as a result of further exposure to the sacred Writings he was deeply moved.

In 1302 A.H./1884 from Yazd he proceeded to Mashhad where he stayed for about a year and a half. In order to satisfy his internal agitation, he decided after performance of each morning's obligatory prayer to recite a special prayer known as Du`a Davazdah Imam. On the fortieth morning, his biographers note, upon reciting the phrase "...the divinely hidden Personage..." all veils of earthly knowledge were lifted and immediately he stood to recite a special Tablet of Visitation revealed by Baha'u'llah in honor of his uncle, Vahid. Thereupon spiritual certitude was his.

In 1305 A.H./1887 he proceeded to Tihran and arrived at the home of his cousin, Tuba Khanum, and through her and her brother, Siyyid Muhsin, was able to deepen his knowledge in the Faith of Baha'u'llah and began his life-long path of service. It was during this time that he became closely connected with a number of government officials and solidified his reputation as a wise and learned counsel.

Two years later, Jalalu'd-Dawlih, a son of Zillul's-Sultan, was appointed governor of the province of Yazd and decided to take Mirza Yusuf Kashfi with him. On learning that Mirza Yusuf had refused this offer, Jalali'd-Dawlih informed him that, if necessary, he would be taken to Yazd in chains. In an effort to distance himself from the crazed Prince, he immediately accepted a position in the newly established American College in Tihran, teaching Arabic and Persian courses. Ceasing the opportunity, he also began to study English language and the history of Church and was able to acquire certificate of completion some nine months later. By now he had attracted the attention of the College administers and was appointed the supervisor of the school's expansion program, including its construction activities. On a number of occasions, including the time when the monarch, Nasiri'd-Din Shah, visited the College, Mirza Yusuf was asked to represent the school to the government officials or to intercede on behalf of the Mission.

In 1308 A.H./1890, Mirza Yusuf married a daughter of Tuba Khanum, the daughter of Vahid Darabi. It was soon thereafter that the American Mission launched efforts to establish a school in Ridaiyyih and for this purpose Miss Green arrived from the United States and another missionary worker, Dr. Cochron, was recalled from Ridayyih to report on the progress towards establishing this enterprise. On meeting Mirza Yusuf, both were greatly impressed with his abilities and asked him to assist with the Ridaiyyih facility. He readily accepted and with his family proceeded there, but his stay was short-lived and he returned to Tihran. It was then that his wife passed away and was buried in Imam-zadih Yahya, next to her mother.

In the early months of 1892, he decided to attain the presence of Baha'u'llah and proceeded towards 'Akka. However upon reaching Tabriz, he learned of His Ascension and deeply grieved, decided against completion of the journey and remained in Ridaiyyih for a year, and from there he returned to Tihran.

In 1311 A.H./1894, once again the American Protestant Missionary in Tihran appointed him the principle of their College in Ridaiyyih. In was there that he married again, formed a family, and through hard work, expanded his estate.

Much like his uncle, Mirza Yusuf possessed an uncanny ability for cultivating relations with the ruling class and since Tabriz traditionally served as the seat for the heir to the Qajar throne, he established important contacts in that town. The most beneficial of his relations, as it turned out, was with the governor of Tabriz, Prince Imam-Quli Mirza, who introduced him to Prince Muzaffaru'd-Din Mirza. On meeting Mirza Yusuf and hearing him make a representation on behalf of Imam-Quli Mirza, the royal prince was enchanted with his personality and knowledge, thereby honored him with the title "Lisan-i Huzur" (the sanctified tongue).

In 1313 A.H./1895, he traveled to the Ottoman region and remained for some six months as a tutor of Siyyid Tah, a son of Shaykh Sadiq, the religious leader of Naqshbandi tribe. Years later, around 1919-20, both this student together with another Naqshbandi leader, Shaykh 'Abdu'llah, visited Mirza Yusuf in Ridaiyyih and both accepted the Message of Baha'u'llah.

In the same year, subsequent to the assassination of Nasiri'd-Din Shah, Prince Muzaffaru'd-Din Mirza came to the throne and his son Muhammad-Ali Mirza was named his heir and established himself in Tabriz. A few years later, in 1319 A.H./1901, the young Prince paid an official visit to Ridaiyyih in course of which he came to the American Protestant Mission and through the Nazimu'l-Kukama was introduced to Mirza Yusuf. Some days later, Mirza Yusuf was called to Tabriz and after detailed discussions with the Prince about the Faith, in the presence of many high-ranking officials, the title of "Lisan-i Huzur" was reconfirmed and he was granted the honorary rank of Army Colonel.

In 1902, he met Siyyid Assadu'llah Qumi who wrote of him to 'Abdu'l-Baha in response to which Mirza Yusuf received a moving Tablet which starts with the words "O seeker of the Beloved of the worlds". In the course of this Tablet, the Master noted, "The field of service is wide open." As such, he decided to resign his post, sell his belongings and undertake a number of teaching journeys. On hearing his plans for visiting 'Abdu'l-Baha in the Holy Land and the subsequent travels to Europe and the North America, Prince Muhammad-Ali Mirza issued three royal commands to the Iranian embassies in Istanbul, London and Washington, to ensure his comfort and needs. However, Mirza Yusuf never approached the Iranian officials with any request.

After receiving permission from 'Abdu'l-Baha to make such a journey, he hastened to 'Akka to attain his heart's desire. During the nineteen days that he remained there he drank his fill from the life-giving draught of the presence of the Master and on daily basis paid homage to the Sacred Shrine of Baha'u'llah. Because of his fluency in English, 'Abdu'l-Baha instructed him to visit the United States, which he accomplished via Port Said, Cairo, Alexandria, Italy, Paris, London, Liverpool, and eventually arrived at Quebec and then proceed to Boston. From there, he went to New York and met with Mirza Abu'l-Fadl and Ali-Kuli Khan. After consultation with local Baha'is, he traveled extensively for a period of over a year in the eastern States, including Pennsylvania, Maryland, and some of the mid-western regions such as the State of Missouri – everywhere assisting with deepening and consolidation efforts. During these days, from very early in the morning until several hours into the night, he would exert himself and do all he could in promotion of the Faith. At the conclusion of his journey, he traveled to Maine and stayed at the Green Acres for a while. During this period, he regularly gave lectures on the teachings of the Cause, its history and the station of 'Abdu'l-Baha that resulted many to enroll under the banner of the Faith. In so doing, in effect, he was preparing the community for the arrival of the Master in a few years time. After a stay of two years in the States, due to adverse weather and the deterioration of his health, and following consultation with Mirza Abu'l-Fadl and upon 'Abdu'l-Baha's approval, he returned to Ridaiyyih and resumed his earlier career.

Though initially he was disappointed for not being able to stay longer in the North America, soon he received a Tablet from the Master urging him to serve in his native country and to readily accept what God had ordained. From pursuing this Tablet, Mirza Yusuf set aside all caution and openly taught the Faith to everyone he encountered, including his own classes in the Missionary College. Soon several of his students embraced the Faith, which caused great uproar among the school administers who decided upon termination of his appointment. They also complained to the authorities, who because of Mirza Yusuf's standing in the community, ignored their plea. The school officials however combined their forces with certain fanatical elements and one day rushed and plundered his home. Since 'Abdu'l-Baha had instructed him to be resigned to the will of God, Mirza Yusuf did not approach the officials to redress his case.

Upon hearing the details, 'Abdu'l-Baha urged him to travel teach in Adharbayjan. As such, he spent a period of time promoting the Cause until he eventually settled in the village of Shishvan, on the outskirts of Ridaiyyih Lake. For the next seven months he served as a tutor for the four sons of the Prince Imam-Quli Mirza and was granted an annual stipend of one hundred tumans and a ton of wheat. During this time, he continued with his intense teaching work that resulted in several individuals, including his four students, recognizing the Faith.

In 1923 he left that region for Tihran where he accepted a position at the Tarbiyat Baha'i School in addition to his post of the English-Persian translator for the Commerce Ministry. Three years later he left for Qazvin and served for a year and a half as the principle of Hamdu'llah Mustawfi School, after which for the next five years he administered Tavvakul Baha'i school of the same town.

In 1929, when Martha Roth was visiting Iran, he accompanied her to Adharbayijan and served as her translator. After which he returned to Qazvin and resumed his teaching work and service to the Cause. Again some four years later when the American travel teacher, Miss Ramson Kehler, visited Iran he served as her translator during her two-year journeys to Gilan, Khurasan and Mazandaran. It was after her untimely passing in Isfahan that he decided to complete her tour by himself and for the next four years traveled extensively in various regions of the country, assisting the community with learning the basics of administration and Baha'i organizational structure. When in 1938 Millard Mutahidih visited Iran, bearing messages from Shoghi Effendi, Mirza Yusuf assisted her as a translator in her tour of the eastern provinces.

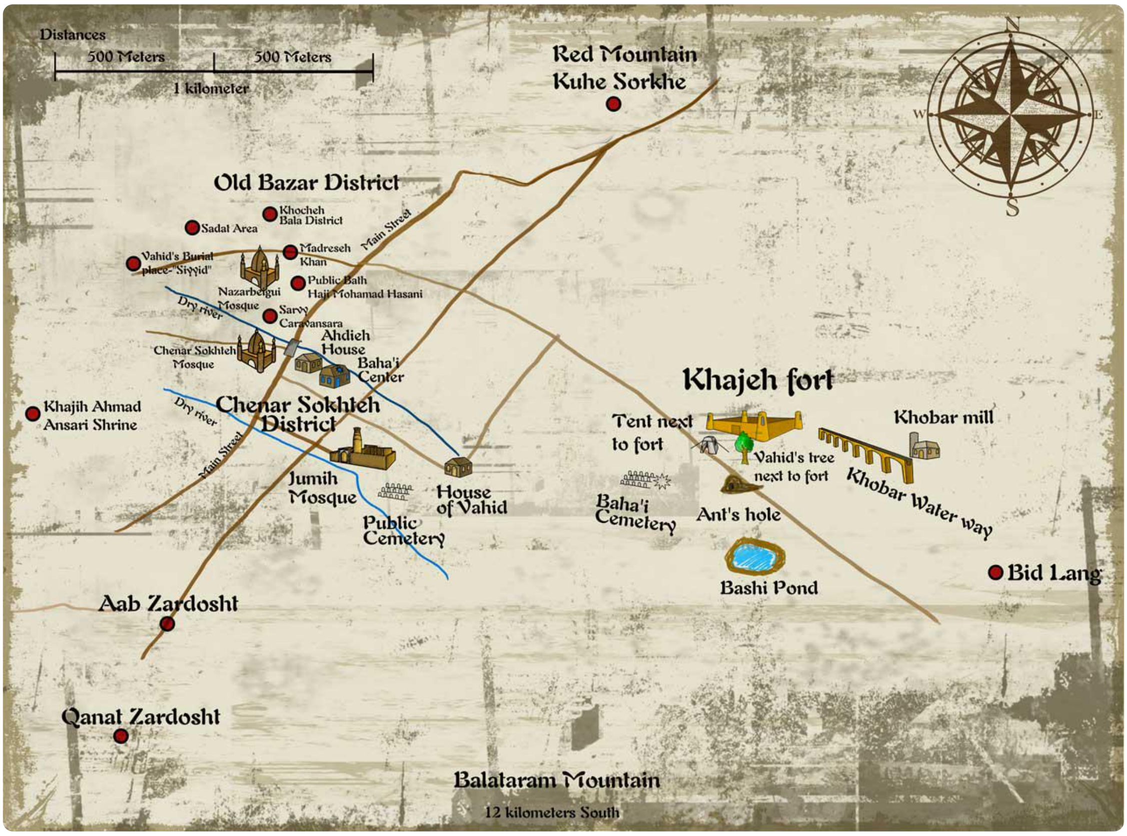
In total Mirza Yusuf married four times. He had divorced his first wife prior to his conversion to the Baha'i Faith and had married again, this time his spouse had died prematurely. His third union resulted in a son, 'Atau'llah, who became an agricultural engineer and served the Faith with great distinction. On passing of this wife, Mirza Yusuf married again which resulted in daughter named Khujastih.

Much like his celebrated uncle, Vahid Darabi, he possessed an unusual command of Islamic sciences and traditions and in course of his teaching activities was able to draw upon this fount of knowledge with great facility. In addition to his deep Baha'i knowledge, his command of several languages, such as, English, Arabic, French, and Turkish enabled him to promote the Faith in many regions beyond his immediate environ. He was recipient of numerous Tablets from the Center of the Covenant, which eloquently testify to his life-long services, particularly in the region of Adharbayijan where he lived for well over three decades. In one of the many Tablets that he received from 'Abdu'l-Baha, he was titled Vahid as a remembrance of his illustrious uncle, Vahid Darabi. The Master in this Tablet enjoined upon him service to the Cause with the same degree of sacrifice and self-renunciation manifested a generation earlier by his uncle.

During the ministry of the Guardian, he continued to be a source of encouragement and a pillar of the faith to the community and was frequently blessed by receiving letters from Shoghi Effendi. In his latter days, he devoted much time to organizing deepening activities for the younger generation.

He passed away on 3 October 1959, at the age of 94, and was buried at Tihran Baha'i cemetery and indeed the community of Iran was robbed one of its ablest promoters. The Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land instructed the Iranian Baha'i community to commemorate his passing by holding meetings in his honor throughout the country, and their cable to the community reads:

Deeply saddened news passing distinguished servant Cause God renowned scholar Vahid. Assure his family fervent prayers sacred threshold progress his noble soul. Organize befitting memorial gatherings. Hands Cause.


Distances
500 Meters
500 Meters
1 kilometer
Red Mountain
Kuhe Sorkhe
N
W
E
S
Old Bazar District
Khocheh Bala District
Sadat Area
Main Street
Vahid's Burial place-"Siyyid"
Madreseh Khan
Public Bath Haji Mohamad Hasani
Nazarbeigui Mosque
Dry river
Sarvy Caravansara
Ahdieh House
Chenar Sokhteh Mosque
Baha'i Center
Khajih Ahmad Ansari Shrine
Chenar Sokhteh District
Dry river
Main Street
Jumih Mosque
House of Vahid
Public Cemetery
Khajeh fort
Tent next to fort
Khobar mill
Vahid's tree next to fort
Baha'i Cemetery
Ant's hole
Khobar Water way
Bashi Pond
Bid Lang
Aab Zardosht
Qanat Zardosht
Balataram Mountain
12 kilometers South

Comments

MAY 27. ON THIS DATE IN 1967, MILDRED EILEEN CLARK, NAMED A KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS, DIED IN TURKU, FINLAND.

May 27. On this date in 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark, named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Lofoten Islands, died in Turku, Finland.

Born in Manchester, Illinois, on May 24, 1892, Mildred Clark chose pioneering as her field of service from the earliest days of her conversion to the Bahá'í Faith.

In the first Seven Year Plan (1937-1944) assigned to the United States she pioneered to Denver, Colorado, and there married George Clark. In 1946, at the inception of the second Seven Year Plan (1946-1953), she offered to go to Europe and was requested by the European Teaching Committee to settle in Norway where, in 1948, she assisted in the formation of the first Spiritual Assembly of Oslo.

In January 1950, she pioneered to the Netherlands and in 1952 she was asked to go to Luxembourg to assist in making the necessary arrangements for the European Teaching Conference held there in September 1952. Following this she returned to Oslo and actively resumed her service there.

While attending the European Intercontinental Teaching Conference held in Stockholm in July 1953, Mildred Clark volunteered to serve in Svolvaer, Lofoten Islands. She was one of the first to arise in the Ten Year Crusade, arriving at her post in August 1953. For this service she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi. She remained at this distant post for more then ten years, later returning to Norway. When the need for pioneers became apparent in Finland, she moved to that country, her final pioneering goal.

On May 27, 1967, Mildred Eileen Clark died in Turku, Finland.

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 27, 1966, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "THE GUARDIANSHIP AND THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE" IN RESPONSE "TO QUESTIONS ASKED BY AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GUARDIANSHIP AND THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE."

May 27. On this date in 1966, the Universal House of Justice wrote "The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice" in response "to questions asked by an individual believer on the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice."

On February 8, 1934, Shoghi Effendi had penned a work that would become the chapter titled "Administrative Order" in his book *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*

The chapter is notable for several aspects, including the emphasis that places on the institution of the Guardianship.

The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice

Passages from a letter written in response to questions asked by an individual believer on the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

. . . You query the timing of the election of the Universal House of Justice in view of the Guardian's statement: ". . . given favorable circumstances under which the Bahá'ís of Persia and the adjoining countries under Soviet rule may be enabled to elect their national representatives . . . the only remaining obstacle in the way of the definite formation of the International House of Justice will have been removed." On April 19, 1947 the Guardian, in a letter written on his behalf by his secretary, replied to the inquiry of an individual believer about this passage: "At the time he referred to Russia there were Bahá'ís there. Now the community has practically ceased to exist; therefore the formation of the International House of Justice cannot depend on a Russian national spiritual assembly, but other strong national spiritual assemblies will have to be built up before it can be established."

You suggest the possibility that, for the good of the Cause, certain information concerning the succession to Shoghi Effendi is being withheld from the believers. We assure you that nothing whatsoever is being withheld from the friends for whatever reason. There is no doubt at all that in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi was the authority designated to appoint his successor; but he had no children and all the surviving Aghsán

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had broken the Covenant. Thus, as the Hands of the Cause stated in 1957, it is clear that there was no one he could have appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Will. To have made an appointment outside the clear and specific provisions of the Master's Will and Testament would obviously have been an impossible and unthinkable course of action for the Guardian, the divinely appointed upholder and defender of the Covenant. Moreover, that same Will had provided a clear means for the confirmation of the Guardian's appointment of his successor, as you are aware. The nine Hands to be elected by the body of the Hands were to give their assent by secret ballot to the Guardian's choice. In 1957 the entire body of the Hands, after fully investigating the matter, announced that Shoghi Effendi had appointed no successor and left no will. This is documented and established.

The fact that Shoghi Effendi did not leave a will cannot be adduced as evidence of his failure to obey Bahá'u'lláh — rather should we acknowledge that in his very silence there is a wisdom and a sign of his infallible guidance. We should ponder deeply the writings that we have, and seek to understand the multitudinous significances that they contain. Do not forget that Shoghi Effendi said two things were necessary for a growing understanding of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: the passage of time and the guidance of the Universal House of Justice.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WITHIN ITS ORDAINED SPHERE

The infallibility of the Universal House of Justice, operating within its ordained sphere, has not been made dependent upon the presence in its membership of the Guardian of the Cause. Although in the realm of interpretation the Guardian's pronouncements are always binding, in the

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area of the Guardian's participation in legislation it is always the decision of the House itself which must prevail. This is supported by the words of the Guardian: "The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.

"Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances."

However, quite apart from his function as a member and sacred head for life of the Universal House of Justice, the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, had the right and duty "to define the sphere of the legislative action" of the Universal House of Justice. In other words, he had the authority to state whether a matter was or was not already covered by the Sacred Texts and therefore whether it was within the authority of the Universal House of Justice to legislate upon it. No other person, apart from the Guardian, has the right or authority to make such definitions. The question therefore arises: In the absence of the Guardian, is the Universal House of Justice in danger of straying outside its proper sphere and thus falling into error? Here we must remember three things: First, Shoghi Effendi, during

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the thirty-six years of his Guardianship, has already made innumerable such definitions, supplementing those made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. As already announced to the friends, a careful study of the Writings and interpretations on any subject on which the House of Justice proposes to legislate always precedes its act of legislation. Second, the Universal House of Justice, itself assured of Divine guidance, is well aware of the absence of the Guardian and will approach all matters of legislation only when certain of its sphere of jurisdiction, a sphere which the Guardian has confidently described as "clearly defined." Third, we must not forget the Guardian's written statement about these two institutions: "Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other."

ENACTMENTS OF UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE ARE INSPIRED AND SPIRITUAL

As regards the need to have deductions made from the Writings to help in the formulation of the enactments of the House of Justice, there is the following text from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Those matters of major importance which constitute the foundation of the Law of God are explicitly recorded in the Text, but subsidiary laws are left to the House of Justice. The wisdom of this is that the times never remain the same, for change is a necessary quality and an essential attribute of this world, and of time and place. Therefore the House of Justice will take action accordingly.

"Let it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decision according to its own concepts and opinions. God forbid! The Supreme House of Justice will take decisions and establish laws through the

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inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit, because it is in the safekeeping and under the shelter and protection of the Ancient Beauty, and obedience to its decisions is a bounden and essential duty and an absolute obligation, and there is no escape for anyone.

"Say, O People: Verily the Supreme House of Justice is under the wings of your Lord, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful, that is under His protection, His care, and His shelter; for He has commanded the firm believers to obey that blessed, sanctified, and all-subduing body, whose sovereignty is divinely ordained and of the Kingdom of Heaven and whose laws are inspired and spiritual.

"Briefly, this is the wisdom of referring the laws of society to the House of Justice. In the religion of Islám, similarly, not every ordinance was explicitly revealed; nay not a tenth part of a tenth part was included in the Text; although all matters of major importance were specifically referred to, there were undoubtedly thousands of laws which were unspecified. These were devised by the divines of a later age according to the laws of Islámic jurisprudence, and individual divines made conflicting deductions from the original revealed ordinances. All these were enforced. Today this process of deduction is the right of the body of the House of Justice, and the deductions and conclusions of individual learned men have no authority, unless they are endorsed by the House of Justice. The difference is precisely this, that from the conclusions and endorsements of the body of the House of Justice whose members are elected by and known to the worldwide Bahá'í community, no differences will arise; whereas the conclusions of individual divines and scholars would definitely lead to differences, and result in schism, division, and dispersion. The oneness of the Word would be destroyed, the unity of the Faith would disappear, and the edifice of the Faith of God would be shaken."

ENSURES CONTINUITY OF AUTHORITY WHICH FLOWS FROM THE SOURCE OF OUR FAITH

In the Order of Bahá'u'lláh there are certain functions which are reserved to certain institutions, and others which are shared in common, even though they may be more in the special province of one or the other. For example, although the Hands of the Cause of God have the specific functions of protection and propagation, and are specialized for these functions, it is also the duty of the Universal House of Justice and the spiritual assemblies to protect and teach the Cause — indeed teaching is a sacred obligation placed upon every believer by Bahá'u'lláh. Similarly, although after the Master authoritative interpretation was exclusively vested in the Guardian, and although legislation is exclusively the function of the Universal House of Justice, these two institutions are, in Shoghi Effendi's words, "complementary in their aim and purpose." "Their common, their fundamental object is to ensure the continuity of that divinely appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers, and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings." Whereas the Universal House of Justice cannot undertake any function which exclusively appertained to the Guardian, it must continue to pursue the object which it shares in common with the Guardianship.

As you point out with many quotations, Shoghi Effendi repeatedly stressed the inseparability of these two institutions. Whereas he obviously envisaged their functioning together, it cannot logically be deduced from this that one is unable to function in the absence of the other. During the

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whole thirty-six years of his Guardianship Shoghi Effendi functioned without the Universal House of Justice. Now the Universal House of Justice must function without the Guardian, but the principle of inseparability remains. The Guardianship does not lose its significance nor position in the Order of Bahá'u'lláh merely because there is no living Guardian. We must guard against two extremes: one is to argue that because there is no Guardian all that was written about the Guardianship and its position in the Bahá'í World Order is a dead letter and was unimportant; the other is to be so overwhelmed by the significance of the Guardianship as to underestimate the strength of the Covenant, or to be tempted to compromise with the clear Texts in order to find somehow, in some way, a "Guardian."

THIS IS GOD'S CAUSE — ITS LIGHT WILL NOT FAIL

Service to the Cause of God requires absolute fidelity and integrity and unwavering faith in Him. No good but only evil can come from taking the responsibility for the future of God's Cause into our own hands and trying to force it into ways that we wish it to go regardless of the clear texts and our own limitations. It is His Cause. He has promised that its light will not fail. Our part is to cling tenaciously to the revealed Word and to the institutions that He has created to preserve His Covenant.

It is precisely in this connection that the believers must recognize the importance of intellectual honesty and humility. In past dispensations many errors arose because the believers in God's Revelation were overanxious to encompass the Divine Message within the framework of their limited understanding, to define doctrines where definition was beyond their power, to explain mysteries which only the wisdom and experience of a later age would make comprehensible, to argue that something was true because it appeared

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desirable and necessary. Such compromises with essential truth, such intellectual pride, we must scrupulously avoid.

If some of the statements of the Universal House of Justice are not detailed the friends should realize that the cause of this is not secretiveness, but rather the determination of this body to refrain from interpreting the teachings and to preserve the truth of the Guardian's statement that "Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions . . . need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin, or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the Teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarranted inferences or unauthorized interpretations of His Word."

DISTINCTION BETWEEN AUTHORITATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATION

A clear distinction is made in our Faith between authoritative interpretation and the interpretation or understanding that each individual arrives at for himself from his study of its teachings. While the former is confined to the Guardian, the latter, according to the guidance given to us by the Guardian himself, should by no means be suppressed. In fact such individual interpretation is considered the fruit of man's rational power and conducive to a better understanding of the teachings, provided that no disputes or arguments arise among the friends and the individual himself understands and makes it clear that his views are merely his own. Individual interpretations continually change as one grows in comprehension of the teachings. As Shoghi Effendi wrote: "To deepen in the Cause means to read the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to

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be able to give it to others in its pure form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall into this error and injure the Movement we so much adore. There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we read the Writings, the more truths we can find in them, the more we will see that our previous notions were erroneous." So, although individual insights can be enlightening and helpful, they can also be misleading. The friends must therefore learn to listen to the views of others without being overawed or allowing their faith to be shaken, and to express their own views without pressing them on their fellow Bahá'ís.

The Cause of God is organic, growing and developing like a living being. Time and again it has faced crises which have perplexed the believers, but each time the Cause, impelled by the immutable purpose of God, overcame the crisis and went on to greater heights.

"UNTO THE MOST HOLY BOOK EVERY ONE MUST TURN"

However great may be our inability to understand the mystery and the implications of the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the strong cord to which all must cling with assurance is the Covenant. The emphatic and vigorous language of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament is at this time, as at the time of His own passing, the safeguard of the Cause: "Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of

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them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant." And again: "All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error."

The Universal House of Justice, which the Guardian said would be regarded by posterity as "the last refuge of a tottering civilization," is now, in the absence of the Guardian, the sole infallibly guided institution in the world to which all must turn, and on it rests the responsibility for ensuring the unity and progress of the Cause of God in accordance with the revealed Word. There are statements from the Master and the Guardian indicating that the Universal House of Justice, in addition to being the highest legislative body of the Faith, is also the body to which all must turn, and is the "apex" of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, as well as the "supreme organ of the Bahá'í Commonwealth." The Guardian has in his writings specified for the House of Justice such fundamental functions as the formulation of future worldwide teaching plans, the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, and the guidance, organization, and unification of the affairs of the Cause throughout the world. Furthermore in God Passes By the Guardian makes the following statement: "The Kitáb-i-Aqdas . . . not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded." He has also, in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh," written that the members of the Universal House of Justice "and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect

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them, have thus been made the recipients of the Divine guidance which is at once the lifeblood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation."

As the Universal House of Justice has already announced, it cannot legislate to make possible the appointment of a successor to Shoghi Effendi, nor can it legislate to make possible the appointment of any more Hands of the Cause, but it must do everything within its power to ensure the performance of all those functions which it shares with these two mighty institutions. It must make provision for the proper discharge in future of the functions of protection and propagation, which the administrative bodies share with the Guardianship and the Hands of the Cause; it must, in the absence of the Guardian, receive and disburse the Huqúqu'lláh, in accordance with the following statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Disposition of the Huqúq, wholly or partly, is permissible, but this should be done by permission of the authority in the Cause to whom all must turn." It must make provision in its constitution for the removal of any of its members who commits a sin "injurious to the common weal." Above all, it must, with perfect faith in Bahá'u'lláh, proclaim His Cause and enforce His law that the Most Great Peace shall be firmly established in this world and the foundation of the Kingdom of God on earth shall be accomplished.

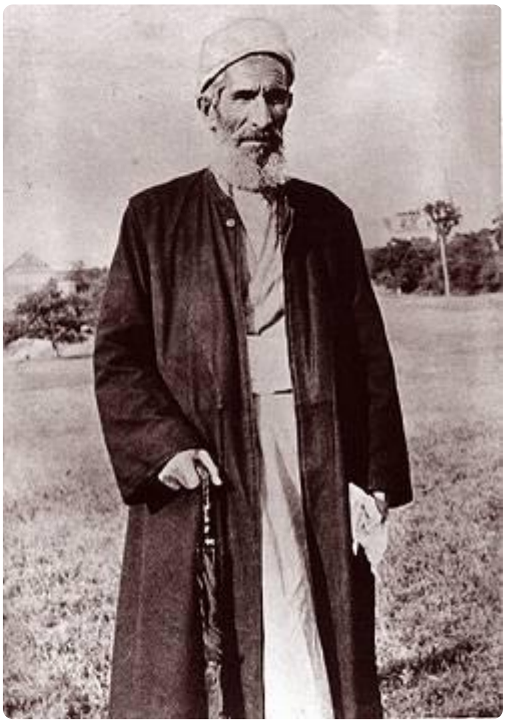
May 27, 1966

Comments

Original Index: 1386 | Current Position: 186

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 2002 THE UHJ WROTE A DOCUMENT TITLED "RECONCILIATION OF APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS" REGARDING MÍRZÁ ABU'L-FADL ON ABRAHAM AND ZOROASTER; 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ AND A BABY NAMING CEREMONY; MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE; CORPORAL PUNISHMENT; TÁHIRIH AS A WOMAN SUFFRAGETTE.

May 28. On this date in 2002 the Universal House of Justice wrote a document titled "Reconciliation of Apparent Contradictions in the Bahá'í Writings" regarding Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl on Abraham and Zoroaster; 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a Baby Naming Ceremony; Minimum Age of Marriage; Smoking and Firmness in the Covenant; Corporal Punishment; Táhirih as "Woman Suffragette."



Comments

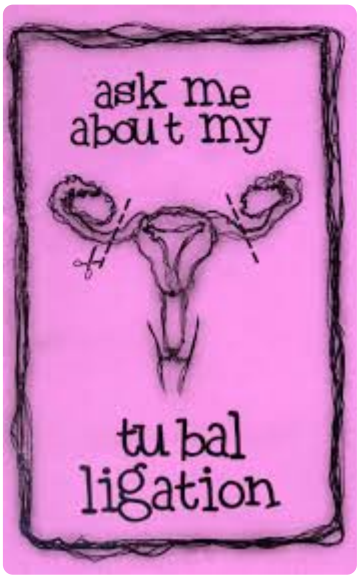
MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1978, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO HAVE A SURGICAL OPERATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF NOT HAVING MORE CHILDREN IF SUCH AN OPERATION COULD RESULT IN PERMANENT STERILITY."

May 28. On this date in 1978, the Universal House of Justice wrote "under normal circumstances it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

1165. Tubal Ligation

"The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of April 29 asking about **tubal ligation** and has noted that you are familiar with general Bahá'í principles on the subject. However, it has directed us to say that under normal circumstances it is **not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility.**"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 28, 1978)



Comments

Original Index: 1388 | Current Position: 188

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1998, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "WITH RESPECT TO YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR OWN CONTACT WITH COVENANT-BREAKERS...YOU WILL WANT TO RESIST ANY TEMPTATION TO BE DRAWN INTO DISCUSSIONS OR CONSIDERATION OF THE ARGUMENTS WHICH THEY MAY ADVANCE."

May 28. On this date in 1998, the Universal House of Justice wrote "With respect to your concerns about your own contact with Covenant-breakers...You will want to resist any temptation to be drawn into discussions or consideration of the arguments which they may advance."

Regarding your concerns about Covenant-breakers participating in and posting material to the "Bahá'í Forum" on America Online (AOL), you should, of course, scrupulously and impartially uphold the rules of AOL's "Religion and Beliefs" area. You may warn the friends about interaction with Covenant-breakers if you feel it to be appropriate and if you can do so without violating the impartiality that you, as Forum manager, must demonstrate.

With respect to your concerns about your own contact with Covenant-breakers, you should feel no trepidation at having to interact with them in his particular situation and, if necessary, to read their postings. It is suggested, however, that your contact with them be kept to a minimum, as strictly required by your obligations as Forum manager. You will want to resist any temptation to be drawn into discussions or consideration of the arguments which they may advance.

(From a letter dated 28 May 1998 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual)

Comments

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1998, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE "REGARDING YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT COVENANT-BREAKERS PARTICIPATING IN AND POSTING MATERIAL TO THE "BAHÁ'Í FORUM" ON AMERICA ONLINE (AOL)...YOU MAY WARN THE FRIENDS ABOUT INTERACTION WITH COVENANT-BREAKERS...

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(From a letter dated 28 May 1998 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual)

Comments

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1953, SHOGHI EFFENDI SENT A CABLEGRAM "TO THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD" WHEREIN HE FIRST REFERRED TO THE "KNIGHTS" OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, CALLING FOR THE "DISPERSAL, IMMEDIATE, DETERMINED, SUSTAINED AND UNIVERSAL" OF PIONEERS "THROUGHOUT THE UNOPENED TERRITORIES OF THE PLANET".

May 28. On this date in 1953, Shoghi Effendi sent a cablegram "to The Bahá'í World" wherein he first referred to the "Knights" of Bahá'u'lláh, calling for the "dispersal, immediate, determined, sustained and universal" of pioneers "throughout the unopened territories of the planet". He announced his intention to inscribe, in chronological order, the names of the "spiritual conquerors" on an illuminated "Roll of Honor, to be deposited at the entrance door of the inner sanctuary of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh, as a permanent memorial of the contribution by the champions of His Faith at the victorious conclusion of the opening campaign of the Global Crusade..."

The Paramount Issue

On occasion of the sixty-first Anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, on the morrow of the opening, initial phase of the momentous World Crusade, call upon His followers in all continents to allow no slackening, nay, to insure acceleration of the marvelous momentum generated by the historic celebrations climaxing the festivities of Holy Year. ** The dispersal, immediate, determined, sustained and universal, throughout the unopened territories of the planet, is the paramount issue challenging the spirit and resources of the privileged prosecutors of the Ten-Year Plan in the course of the current year. **

All National Assemblies are urged to give it priority assignments in their national budgets. The chief executors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Plan, by virtue of the primacy conferred in His Tablets, are accorded the prerogative to stimulate the vital process of the dispersal through the dispatch, in addition to their allotted tasks, of pioneers to the virgin territories allocated to their sister communities East and West.

Once again I appeal to members of all communities to arise and enlist, ere the present opportunity is irretrievably lost, in the army of Bahá'u'lláh's crusaders. The hour is ripe to disencumber themselves of worldly vanities, to mount the steed of steadfastness, **unfurl the banner of renunciation, don the armor of utter consecration to God's Cause, gird themselves with the girdle of a chaste and holy life, unsheathe the sword of Bahá'u'lláh's utterance,** buckle on the shield of His love, carry as sole provision implicit trust in His promise, flee their homelands, and scatter far and wide to capture the unsurrendered territories of the entire planet.

Would to God that **Bahá'í warriors, six score and ten, the number required to fill the gaps in the still unconquered territories of the globe,** will promptly arise and enroll themselves to achieve the goals ere the conclusion of the opening year of the decade-long, greatest collective enterprise since the memorable episodes associated with the Dawn-Breakers of the Heroic Age.

Planning to inscribe, in chronological order, the names of the spiritual conquerors on an illuminated Roll of Honor, to be deposited at the entrance door of the inner Sanctuary of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh, as a permanent memorial of the contribution by the champions of His Faith at the victorious conclusion of the opening campaign of the Global Crusade which is destined to attain consummation at the Most Great Jubilee commemorating the Centenary of the Declaration of His Mission. Anticipate making periodic announcements of the names of the valiant **knights** upon their arrival at their posts to discharge their historic missions.

Share message National Assemblies of the Bahá'í World.

--Shoghi

[Cablegram, May 28, 1953]

What has always struck me about the designation of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh is the arbitrariness with which the "virgin territories" were defined. For example, the Cook Islands and Tonga Island, both part of the Realm of New Zealand have distinct sets of Knights, while Niue and the Chatham Islands, also part of the Realm of New Zealand, are Knightless.

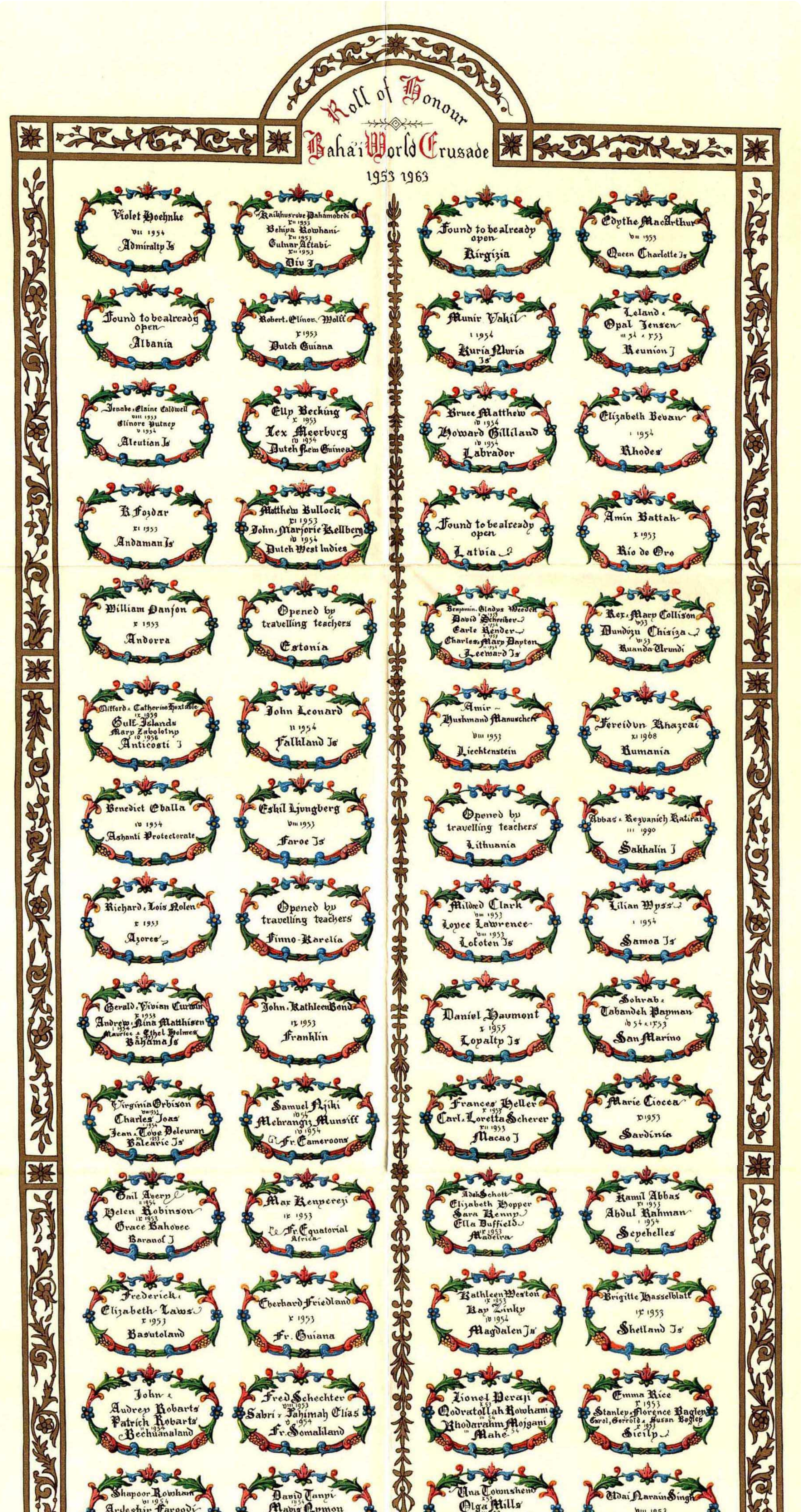
Several islands off the coast of Alaska have distinct Knights, like Baranof Island , Kodiak Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Yet other Alaskan islands, like the Pribilof Islands are Knightless.

The Brazilian state of Amapá has its own Knights (for Portuguese Guiana), while the other Brazilian states are Knightless.

Crete and Rhodes have Knights distinct from the Knights of mainland Greece, yet other Greek islands, like Santorini and Samos, are Knightless.

Key West has its own Knight, yet the other Florida Keys are Knightless.

Tiny islands, like Grand Manan, have their own Knights. St. Thomas Island has its own Knight, yet the remaining Leeward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands. Similarly, the Windward Islands have one set of Knights, representing numerous politically and geographically independent islands.



Roll of Honour

Baha'i World Crusade

1953 1963

Violet Hoehnke
vii 1954
Admiralty Is

Found to be already open
Albania

Jenabe & Elaine Caldwell
viii 1953
Elinore Putney
v 1954
Aleutian Is

K. Fozdar
xi 1953
Andaman Is

William Danjon
x 1953
Andorra

Clifford & Catherine Huxtable
ix 1959
Gulf Islands
Mary Zabolotny
iv 1956
Anticosti I

Benedict Eballa
iv 1954
Ashanti Protectorate

Richard & Lois Nolen
x 1953
Azores

Gerald & Vivian Curwin
x 1953
Andrew & Nina Matthisen
i 1954
Maurice & Ethel Holmes
xi 1953
Bahama Is

Virginia Orbison
viii 1953
Charles Ioas
i 1954
Jean & Tove Deleuran
xii 1953
Balearic Is

Gail Avery
ii 1954
Helen Robinson
ix 1953
Grace Bahovec
Baranof I

Frederick & Elizabeth Laws
x 1953
Basutoland

John & Audrey Robarts
Patrick Robarts
ii 1954
Bechuanaland

Shapoor Rowhani
vi 1954
Ardeshir Faroodi

Kaikhusrove Dahamobedi
xii 1953
Behiya Rowhani
xii 1953
Gulnar Aftabi
xii 1953
Diu I

Robert & Elinor Wolff
x 1953
Dutch Guiana

Elly Becking
x 1953
Lex Meerburg
iv 1954
Dutch New Guinea

Matthew Bullock
xi 1953
John & Marjorie Kellberg
iv 1954
Dutch West Indies

Opened by travelling teachers
Estonia

John Leonard
ii 1954
Falkland Is

Eskil Ljungberg
viii 1953
Faroe Is

Opened by travelling teachers
Finno-Karelia

John & Kathleen Bond
ix 1953
Franklin

Samuel Njiki
iv 54
Mehrangiz Munsiff
iv 1954
Fr. Cameroons

Max Kenyerezi
ix 1953
Fr. Equatorial Africa

Eberhard Friedland
x 1953
Fr. Guiana

Fred Schechter
viii 1953
Sabri & Fahimah Elias
v 1954
Fr. Somaliland

David Tanyi
1954
Mavis Nymon

Found to be already open
Kirgizia

Munir Vakil
i 1954
Kuria Muria Is

Bruce Matthew
iv 1954
Howard Gilliland
iv 1954
Labrador

Found to be already open
Latvia

Benjamin & Gladys Weeden
x 1955
David Schreiber
iv 1954
Earle Render
x 1953
Charles & Mary Dayton
ii 1954
Leeward Is

Amir - Hushmand Manuschehr
viii 1953
Liechtenstein

Opened by travelling teachers
Lithuania

Mildred Clark
viii 1953
Loyce Lawrence
viii 1953
Lofoten Is

Daniel Haumont
x 1955
Loyalty Is

Frances Heller
x 1953
Carl & Loretta Scherer
xii 1953
Macao I

Ada Schott
Elizabeth Hopper
Sara Kenny
Ella Duffield
ix 1953
Madeira

Kathleen Weston
ix 1953
Kay Zinky
iv 1954
Magdalen Is

Lionel Peraji
x 53
Qodratollah Rowhani
iii 54
Khodarahm Mojgani
iii 54
Mahe

Una Townshend
x 53
Olga Mills

Edythe MacArthur
viii 1953
Queen Charlotte Is

Leland & Opal Jensen
iii 54 & x 53
Reunion I

Elizabeth Bevan
i 1954
Rhodes

Amin Battah
x 1953
Rio de Oro

Rex & Mary Collison
vi 53
Dunduzu Chisiza
vi 53
Ruanda-Urundi

Fereidun Khazrai
xi 1968
Rumania

Abbas & Rezvanieh Katirai
iii 1990
Sakhalin I

Lilian Wyss
i 1954
Samoa Is

Sohrab & Tabandeh Payman
iv 54 & ix 53
San Marino

Marie Ciocca
x 1953
Sardinia

Kamil Abbas
xi 1953
Abdul Rahman
i 1954
Seychelles

Brigitte Hasselblatt
ix 1953
Shetland Is

Emma Rice
x 1953
Stanley & Florence Bagley
Carol, Gerrold & Susan Bagley
x 1953
Sicily

Udai Narain Singh
viii 1953

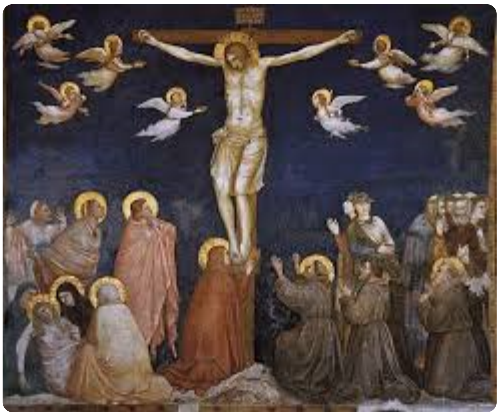
Comments

Original Index: 1391 | Current Position: 191

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1984, THE UHJ ADDRESSED A LETTER STATING "FROM A BAHÁ'Í POINT OF VIEW THE BELIEF THAT THE RESURRECTION WAS THE RETURN TO LIFE OF A BODY OF FLESH AND BLOOD, WHICH LATER ROSE FROM THE EARTH INTO THE SKY IS NOT REASONABLE..."

May 28. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice addressed a letter stating "From a Bahá'í point of view the belief that the Resurrection was the return to life of a body of flesh and blood, which later rose from the earth into the sky is not reasonable, nor is it necessary to the essential truth of the disciples' experience, which is that Jesus did not cease to exist when He was crucified (as would have the belief of many Jews of that period), but that His Spirit, released from the body, ascended to the presence of God and continued to inspire and guide His followers and preside over the destinies of His Dispensation."

Concerning the Resurrection of Christ you quote the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke, where the account stresses the reality of the appearance of Jesus to His disciples who, the Gospel states, at first took Him to be a ghost. From a Bahá'í point of view the belief that the Resurrection was the return to life of a body of flesh and blood, which later rose from the earth into the sky is not reasonable, nor is it necessary to the essential truth of the disciples' experience, which is that Jesus did not cease to exist when He was crucified (as would have the belief of many Jews of that period), but that His Spirit, released from the body, ascended to the presence of God and continued to inspire and guide His followers and preside over the destinies of His Dispensation (from a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, 28 May 1984).



Comments

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1954, A LETTER WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI STATED THAT "THESE 19 DAY FEASTS ARE FOR THE BAHÁ'ÍS, AND THE BAHÁ'ÍS EXCLUSIVELY, AND NO VARIATION FROM THIS PRINCIPLE IS PERMITTED."

May 28. On this date in 1954, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi stated that "These 19 Day Feasts are for the Bahá'ís, and the Bahá'ís exclusively, and no variation from this principle is permitted."

805. The Nineteen Day Feast for Bahá'ís Exclusively--No Variation from this Principle Permitted

"The beloved Guardian has instructed me to write you concerning an action recently taken by your National Assembly, as published in your January-February Bahá'í News, that non-Bahá'ís may attend 19 Day Feasts if 'the earnestness of their interest in the Faith' is vouched for by a declared believer.

"The Guardian wishes me to direct your attention to the fact that none of the institutions of the Faith nor its cardinal principles may be changed under any circumstances.

"The 19 Day Feast is an institution of the Cause, first established by the Bab, later confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, and now made a prominent part of the administrative order of the Faith. **These 19 Day Feasts are for the Bahá'ís, and the Bahá'ís exclusively, and no variation from this principle is permitted.**

"Thus the Guardian feels you should rescind the action taken by your Assembly in opening the Feasts to 'near Bahá'ís', as it is not consistent with the spirit of the administrative order for non-Bahá'ís or near Bahá'ís to attend the 19 Day Feasts, particularly the administrative portion of the Feast."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, May 28, 1954: The Nineteen Day Feast, November 1975)

Comments

Original Index: 1393 | Current Position: 193

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1984, THE UHJ WROTE "IN STUDYING THE BIBLE BAHÁ'ÍS MUST BEAR TWO PRINCIPLES IN MIND... THE SECOND IS THE FACT THAT THE TEXT OF THE EARLY SCRIPTURES, SUCH AS THE BIBLE, IS NOT WHOLLY AUTHENTIC."

May 28. On this date in 1984, the Universal House of Justice wrote "In studying the Bible Bahá'ís must bear two principles in mind. The first is that many passages in Sacred Scriptures are intended to be taken metaphorically, not literally, and some of the paradoxes and apparent contradictions which appear are intended to indicate this. The second is the fact that the text of the early Scriptures, such as the Bible, is not wholly authentic."

In studying the Bible Bahá'ís must bear two principles in mind. The first is that many passages in Sacred Scriptures are intended to be taken metaphorically, not literally, and some of the paradoxes and apparent contradictions which appear are intended to indicate this. The second is the fact that the text of the early Scriptures, such as the Bible, is not wholly authentic.

(28 May 1984 to an individual believer)

Comments

MAY 28. ON THIS DATE IN 1960, THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD IN THE HOLY LAND ADDRESSED A LETTER "REPUDIATING THE PREPOSTEROUS CLAIM OF MR. REMEY."

May 28. On this date in 1960, the Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land addressed a letter "repudiating the preposterous claim of Mr. Remey."

To the Hands of the Cause of God and the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í World

Two weeks ago we shared with you messages received up to that time from twenty-four National Spiritual Assemblies repudiating the preposterous claim of Mr. Remey and pledging undeviating loyalty to the Institution of the Hands of the Cause . Since then similar messages have been received in Haifa from all of the remaining national and regional bodies with the exception of the National Assembly of France. The full texts of these communications are attached.

In spite of this world-wide demonstration of solidarity and steadfastness in the Covenant, a group of five members of the French National Assembly accepted Mr. Remey as the Guardian of the Faith, and the National Assembly informed the believers of France of the advent of a new Guardian.

Acting immediately to protect the Faith, the Hands in the Holy Land sent the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, to France as their representative, with specific instructions to dissolve the National Assembly and call for a new election if the five members persisted in their dangerous and disloyal course of action. These misguided believers remained adamant in their views, refused to cooperate with the Hands, resigned as members of the National Assembly, and are now actively opposing the efforts of the Hands to protect the Faith.

The vast majority of the French believers have remained firm, and coinciding with the Commemoration of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, a new election will be held, and a reconstituted National Assembly will come into existence. The thirty-one national and regional bodies will then form an impregnable and closely-knit World Community, dedicated to the fulfilment of the divinely-guided Plan of our beloved Guardian, and triumphant over-any forces seeking to disrupt its basic unity.

The cables and other messages received from the various National and Regional Assemblies, as well as numerous communications sent to the Hands from individual believers in various parts of the world, reflect general acceptance and understanding of the reasons why Mr. Remey's regrettable claim, and his so-called proclamation announcing it, are insupportable and contrary, not only to the Sacred Texts of our Faith, but also to specific instructions and messages of our beloved Guardian.

For the information of the friends everywhere we bring to their attention some of the points which refute this unfortunate and baseless claim.

(1) The quality or station of infallibility, we are told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is of two kinds, one the Most Great Infallibility, which is the one possessed inherently by the Manifestations of God, and the other the conferred infallibility, such as that given to the Master, to the Guardian of the Cause of God, and to the Universal House of Justice. In the Bahá'í Dispensation, only the authorized interpretations of the. Holy Word by the Master and the Guardian, and legislation by the Universal House of Justice have been given this conferred infallibility. There is nothing in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, nor in the messages or instructions of our beloved Guardian, which gives Mr. Remey any basis whatsoever for claiming to be the infallible Guardian. Indeed no one can claim such a station; it can only be conferred by an infallible source, in this Dispensation in accordance with explicit, divinely-revealed Texts.

(2) Mr. Remey makes the preposterous claim that since the International Bahá'í Council was referred to by our beloved Guardian as the forerunner of the supreme administrative institution of the Universal House of Justice, his appointment or designation by Shoghi Effendi as President of this appointed body meant that he would: automatically become the head of the Universal House of Justice when it is elected, and therefore is now to be considered as the Guardian of the Faith. This ridiculous and insupportable contention completely overlooks the fact that the beloved Guardian created the International Council as an appointed body, to serve for a temporary period, with functions clearly defined by him, and that he announced it would be transformed into a "duly elected body". Thus the membership and officers of the elected body would be created only by election, not appointment. There is not the slightest indication in any text or message of the beloved Guardian that Mr. Remey's designation as President of the appointed International Council was any more permanent than that of any of the other appointed members or officers.

(3) Mr. Remey himself signed the Proclamation of the Hands of the Cause in November, 1957 which contained the definite statement that "no successor to Shoghi Effendi could have been appointed by him". This document also clearly stated that "The entire body of the Hands assembled by the nine Hands of the World Centre will decide when and how the International Bahá'í Council is to evolve through the successive stages outlined by the Guardian, culminating in the call to election of the Universal House of Justice by the membership of all National Spiritual Assemblies." This pledge is being fulfilled by the plans announced in the message of the Hands to the Bahá'í world following their last Conclave.

It is clear that Mr. Remey's claim to be the infallible Guardian must be dismissed as completely without foundation, since there is no written authority in the Sacred Texts to support it. We can only repeat the hope expressed in our letter of May 10 that the profound emotional disturbance which undoubtedly prompted his regrettable action will prove to be temporary in character.

We are confident that the friends will now direct all their thoughts and efforts toward the attainment of final victory in the Holy Crusade entrusted to us by our beloved Guardian, and be ever mindful of these words addressed to us by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament:

O ye beloved of the Lord! The greatest of all things is the protection of the True Faith of God, the preservation of His Law, the safe guarding of His Cause and service unto His Word.

With warm Bahá'í love,

In the service of the beloved Guardian,

HANDS OF THE CAUSE IN THE HOLY LAND

Comments

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1892, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH DIED AT THE MANSION OF BAHJÍ. BY THE TIME HIS GREAT-GRANDSON SHOGHI EFFENDI DIED, EVERYONE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S DESCENDANTS EXCEPT FOR SHOGHI EFFENDI HAD BEEN DECLARED COVENANT-BREAKERS BY EITHER SHOGHI EFFENDI OR 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ.

May 29. On this date in 1892, Bahá'u'lláh died at the Mansion of Bahjí. By the time his great-grandson Shoghi Effendi died, everyone of Bahá'u'lláh's descendants except for Shoghi Effendi, including all of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's other grandchildren, had been declared Covenant-breakers by either Shoghi Effendi or 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Comments

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1849, ARTHUR P. DODGE, LATER A DISCIPLE OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, WAS BORN. DODGE BECAME A BAHÁ'Í AFTER ATTENDING LESSONS TAUGHT BY IBRAHIM GEORGE KHEIRALLA.

May 29. On this date in 1849, Arthur P. Dodge, later a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born. Dodge became a Bahá'í after attending lessons taught by Ibrahim George Kheiralla.

Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, later a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was born on May 29, 1849 in Enfield, N.H. of Puritan New England stock. He was self-educated, which made him a firm believer in "common sense" and in the importance of providing people information through magazines and the media so that self-education was possible. At age sixteen Dodge was hired by the *Manchester Union Leader*, one of New Hampshire's leading newspapers, as a reporter; a few years later Dodge passed the New Hampshire and Massachusetts bar examinations and became a lawyer. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, asked him to be one of her lawyers, but he declined. In 1880 he published a flattering biography of the Hon. Phinehas Adams, a businessman from Manchester, N.H. In 1886 Dodge became a magazine publisher in Boston; in 1891 he moved to Chicago and became an inventor.

Dodge had always been curious about religion and attended many churches, but became increasingly skeptical about Protestant teachings. In the fall of 1897, when he was about to move to New York City, he heard of the Bahá'í Faith. He received Kheiralla's Bahá'í lessons in abbreviated form; he invited Kheiralla to come to New York City to teach the Faith there, and hosted him. In January or February 1898, Dodge, his wife Elizabeth, and two of his sons took Kheiralla's entire set of lessons in the first Bahá'í class held in New York City. They all became Bahá'ís.

The Dodge family immediately became active in the Bahá'í community. In the spring of 1898 the New York Bahá'ís elected officers, and they chose Dodge to be their President. In the fall of 1900 Arthur and Elizabeth Dodge went on pilgrimage; returning to the United States via Britain, they visited Edward Granville Browne, the famous Cambridge Orientalist who had met Bahá'u'lláh, and asked him to translate the letters of `Abdu'l-Bahá that they carried home with them. In New York Dodge published the letters from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with some of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements to them, as a booklet titled Tablets from Abdul Beha Abbas to Some American Believers in the year 1900. It was one of the first works of Bahá'í scripture published in the United States. The tablets focused on the interpretation of Christian doctrines and biblical prophecies offered by Kheiralla, as well as Kheiralla's teaching of reincarnation. On 7 December 1900 Dodge was elected to the New York Bahá'í Board of Counsel, the first Bahá'í governing body in that city.

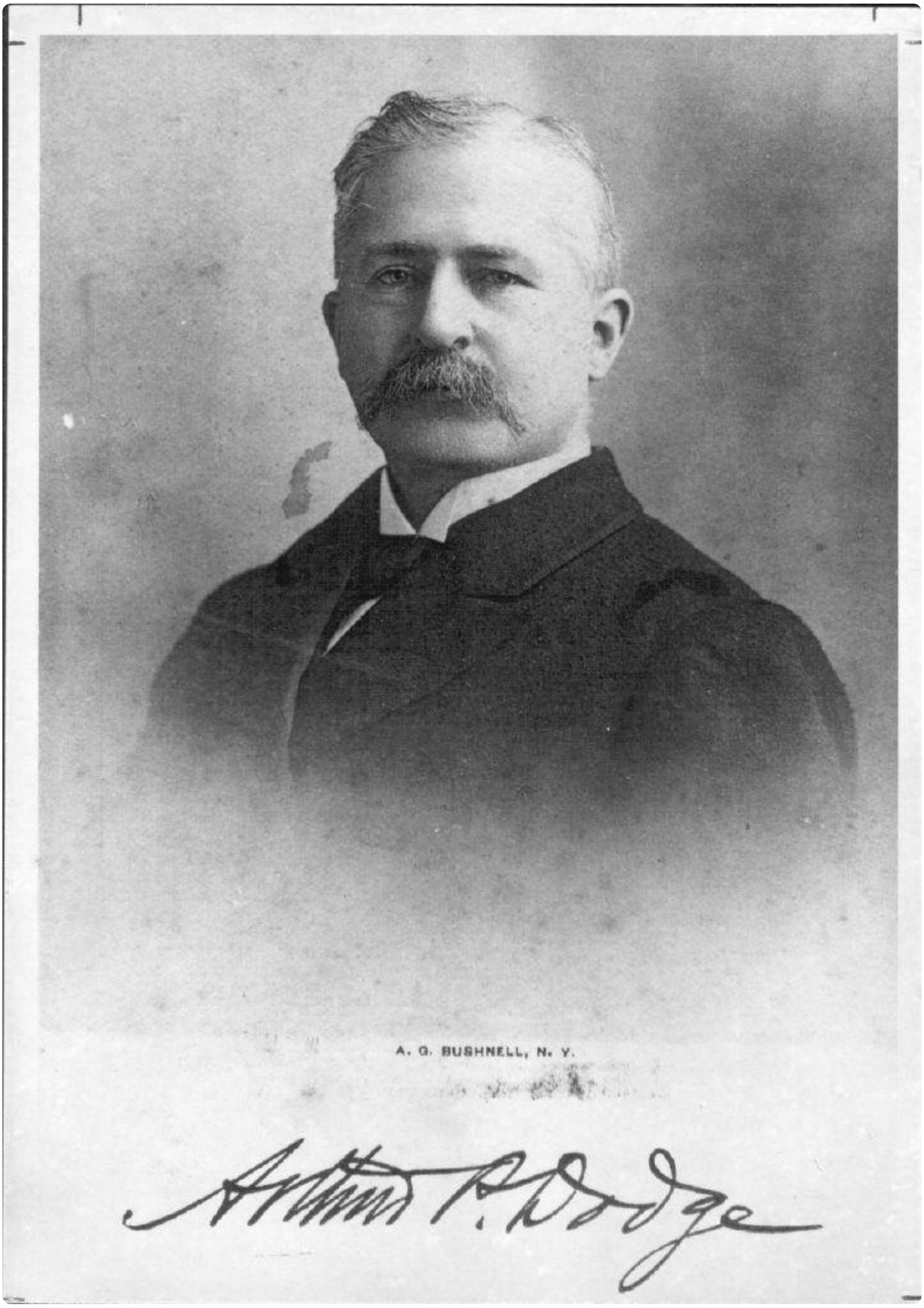
In 1901 Dodge published *The Truth of It: The Inseparable Oneness of Common Sense–Science–Religion*, the first introductory book on the Bahá'í Faith written by a western Bahá'í. Chapters on common sense and science were followed by a series of chapters that defined religion and criticized popular Christian understandings. The work was as much an attack on corrupt clergy, secular-minded scientists, misdirected biblical scholars, foolish cultic beliefs, and organized religion as it was an explanation of a few Bahá'í teachings. The book demonstrates how little a prominent American Bahá'í knew about the Faith in 1900; the depth of Dodge's bitterness toward the churches; and his frustration with scientists, who had consistently displaced his inventions with better ones.

Dodge remained active in the New York Bahá'í community, though not always on its Board of Counsel; by June 1901 apparently he had resigned from the body, probably because of personal disagreements with other members. In 1906 the Board of Counsel listened to a disagreement between Dodge and Howard MacNutt about the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Dodge maintained that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the return of Christ; MacNutt viewed Him as an ordinary man who had attained His station through personal effort. Neither man's position was correct, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station is understood today. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reply denied the idea that He was the return of Christ and emphasized His complete servitude to Bahá'u'lláh; in New York this was understood as a victory for MacNutt's point of view. Since the tablet arrived just six weeks before the 1907 election, MacNutt was elected to the Board of Counsel but Dodge was not; subsequently `Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to a Bahá'í to insist that Dodge be treated with consideration and respect. In 1909 Dodge was again elected to the Board.

In 1907 Dodge published his third and last book, titled *Whence? Why? Whither? Man, Things, Other Things*. In the work Dodge started by exploring the nature, purpose, and direction of human existence. The book's second part considered the nature of religion and offered interpretations of biblical passages and prophecies. The third section spoke of the coming of God's Kingdom on earth. The final section was a discussion of a miscellany of subjects such as racism, crime, church heresy trials, and strikes, with criticism expressed of such figures as Andrew Carnegie, the anti-religious scientist Andrew White, and playwright George Bernard Shaw.

Early in 1914 Dodge and his family moved to Freeport, New York, on Long Island. In his last two years Dodge lost much of the bitterness he felt toward the churches. He died in Freeport on October 12, 1915.

Bibliography. The only recent summary of Dodge's life may be found in O. Z. Whitehead, *Some Bahá'ís to Remember* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1983). Wendell Phillips Dodge, son of Arthur Dodge, has written several biographical articles on his father: "In Memoriam: Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, 1849-1915," in *Star of the West*, vol. 6, no. 19 (2 March 1916), 161-63, 165-67, is the best. He was probably also the author of "Arthur P. Dodge Dead, After Varied Career," a newspaper obituary reprinted in Star of the West, vol. 6, no. 13 (4 November 1915), 100-01. Wendell Phillips Dodge also published "Arthur Pillsbury Dodge and His Motor Car" in New Hampshire Profiles, April 1971, 40. A brief and detailed account of Dodge's life may be found in Robert H. Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America, Origins, 1892-1900, Volume One* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1985), 116-17. In Robert H. Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America, Early Expansion, 1900-12, Volume Two* (unpublished) descriptions of Dodge's pilgrimage and his two books may be found. Dodge's books are very rare today: they are [Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, comp.,] *Tablets of Abdul Beha Abbas to Some American believers in the year 1900. The Truth Concerning A. "Re-incarnation"; B. "Vicarious Atonement"; C. "The Trinity"; D. Real Christianity.* (New York: Board of Counsel, 1901); Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, *The Truth of It: The Inseparable Oneness of Common Sense — Science — Religion* (New York: Mutual Publishing Company, 1901); and Arthur Pillsbury Dodge, *Whence? Why? Whither? Man, Things, Other Things* (Westwood, Mass.: Ariel Press, 1907).



A. G. BUSHNELL, N. Y.

Arthur P. Dodge

Comments

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1921, ALESSANDRO BAUSANI WAS BORN IN ROME. HE WAS A NOTED ITALIAN ORIENTALIST WHO CONVERTED TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH ON APRIL 8, 1950. THE FIRST BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE IN ITALY OCCURRED WHEN HE MARRIED ELSA SCOLA BAUSANI ON OCTOBER 27, 1951.

May 29. On this date in 1921, Alessandro Bausani was born in Rome. He was a noted Italian Orientalist who converted to the Bahá'í Faith on April 8, 1950. The first Bahá'í marriage in Italy occurred when he married Elsa Scola Bausani on October 27, 1951.

The *Encyclopædia Iranica* has an article about him.

Comments

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1907, 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ WROTE SAICHIRO FUJITA ABOUT JAPAN THAT "ONE WILL ENCOUNTER A LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN THE BEGINNING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAUSE OF GOD IN THAT COUNTRY, BUT LATER IT WILL BECOME VERY EASY...."

May 29. On this date in 1907, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote Saichiro Fujita about Japan that "One will encounter a little difficulty in the beginning of the establishment of the Cause of God in that country, but later it will become very easy....There are prophecies concerning the Manifestation in the Buddhist books."

May 29. On this date in 1907, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote Saichiro Fujita...

O thou spiritual Youth!

Japan has made wonderful progress in material civilization, but she will become perfect when she will also make spiritual developments and the Power of the Kingdom become manifest in her.

One will encounter a little difficulty in the beginning of the establishment of the Cause of God in that country, but later it will become very easy. For the inhabitants of Japan are intelligent, sagacious, and have the power of rapid assimilation. For the present a perfect youth like thee is favored by the Bounty of the Kingdom, and attained to the knowledge of the Lord of the Kingdom. Show thou forth an effort that thou mayest finish that which is necessary in the acquisition and study of science and art; then travel thou toward the countries of Japan; so that thou mayest hoist the Ensign of Truth, waving upon the Apex of the Supreme Concourse. Look thou not upon thine own capability, the Invisible Divine Confirmations are great, and the Protection and Providence of the Beauty of Abhá is the helper and assistant. When a drop draws help from the ocean, it is an ocean itself, and a little seed through the outpouring of rain, the favor of the sun, and the soul-refreshing breeze will become a tree with the utmost freshness, full of leaves, blossoms and fruits. Therefore do not consider thy capacity and merit, but rely upon the infinite Bounty and trust to His Highness the Almighty. Do not delay. Undertake soon that which thou art intending.

There are prophecies concerning the Manifestation in the Buddhist books, but they are in symbols and metaphors, and some spiritual conditions are mentioned therein, but the leaders of religion do not understand. They think these prophecies are material things, yet those signs are foreshadowing spiritual occurrence.

(Revealed in Akka, May 29, 1907. Translated by Ahmad Esphahani, July 21, 1907, Washington, D.C.)

Comments

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1926, SHOGHI EFFENDI REFERRED TO THE PUBLICITY GENERATED BY REMARKS MADE EARLIER BY QUEEN MARIE OF ROMANIA AS "THIS MOST ASTONISHING AND HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN THE PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE".

May 29. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi referred to the publicity generated by remarks made earlier by Queen Marie of Romania as "this most astonishing and highly significant event in the progress of the Cause". "In was at this time, when affliction was literally engulfing the Guardian, that, on 4 May, the Toronto Daily Star published a highly appreciative statement made by Queen Marie of Rumania on the Bahá'í Faith, a statement, followed by others during the course of her visit to the United States and Canada, which was printed in about two hundred newspapers and constituted some of the widest and most spectacular publicity the Faith has ever received."

From Chapter 4 of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's book *The Priceless Pearl*, titled "Martha Root and Queen Marie of Rumania"...

Shoghi Effendi used to remark that out of his sufferings something always seemed to be born. He would go through these ordeals by fire - for indeed he seemed to fairly burn with suffering - and then some rain from heaven, in the form of good news, would shower upon him and help to revive him. I am afraid the mystery of sacrifice still remains a mystery to me, but certainly the Holy Ones of this world buy their victories dearly.

In was at this time, when affliction was literally engulfing the Guardian, that, on 4 May, the Toronto Daily Star published a highly appreciative statement made by Queen Marie of Rumania on the Bahá'í Faith, a statement, followed by others during the course of her visit to the United States and Canada, which was printed in about two hundred newspapers and constituted some of the widest and most spectacular publicity the Faith has ever received. In a confidential letter written on 29 May the Guardian refers to this as "this most astonishing and highly significant event in the progress of the Cause".

...

In 1930 her Majesty visited Egypt with her daughter Ileana. Shoghi Effendi, having had the unfortunate experience of indiscreet publicity during her visit to Cyprus, wired

Alexandria on 19 February: "Advise Assembly in case Queen visits Egypt convey only written expression of welcome and appreciation on behalf Bahá'ís. Letter should be briefly carefully worded. No objection sending flowers. Individual communications should be strictly avoided. Inform Cairo."

In the hope that at last the Queen would be able to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Palestine the Guardian had had Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to her grandmother, Queen Victoria, copied in fine Persian calligraphy, and illuminated in Tehran. On 21 February he cabled Tehran: "Illuminated Tablet Queen Victoria should reach Haifa not later than March tenth on one or several pages." This was to be his gift to Her Majesty. Hearing no news of the Queen's plans once she had reached Egypt he wired to her direct on 8 March: "Her Majesty, the Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania, abroad Mayflower, Aswan. Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit His home in Haifa. Your Majesty's acceptance to visit Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine and prison-city of 'Akka will apart from its historic significance be a source of immeasurable strength joy and hope to the silent sufferers of the Faith throughout the East. Our fondest love, prayers and best wishes for Your Majesty's happiness and welfare."

Receiving no reply to this communication Shoghi Effendi sent another wire on 26 March to the Queen at the Hotel Semiramis in Cairo: "Fearing my former letter and telegram in which Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá joined me in extending invitation to Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana may have miscarried, we are pleased to express anew the pleasure it would give us all should Your Majesty find it feasible to visit Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Shrines and the prison-city of 'Akka. Deeply regret unauthorized publicity given by the Press." Two days later the Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: "Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you."

Although Bahá'ís frequently refer to Queen Marie of Romania as "the first member of a royal family to embrace the Bahá'í Faith," Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Ileana of Romania, disputes this claim:

"It is perfectly true that my mother, Queen Marie, did receive Miss Martha Root several times.....She came at the moment when we were undergoing very great family and national stress. At such a moment it was natural that we were receptive to any kind of spiritual message, but it is quite incorrect to say that my mother or any of us at any time contemplated becoming a member of the Baha'i faith."

While the Administrative Order publicly eschews involvement in partisan politics, it has no reservations about routinely using its media outlets to proudly tout unelected royal leaders who are Bahá'í.

For example, on February 19, 1968, Malietoa Tanumafili II, one of Samoa's four paramount chiefs, became a Bahá'í.

Also, On April 24, 2017, the Bahá'í World News Service published a story about Djaouga Abdoulaye, who "became a Baha'i in the 1980s when the Faith initially came to Benin." The news report states that he was enthroned High Chief in July of 2016, assuming a "position of moral and customary authority for the approximately 100,000 Fulani living in the area."

While rare and not promoted in the media outlets of the Administrative Order, there have been Bahá'ís who have been elected to office, such as Ted Livingston, who was the first Bahá'í in the United States to be the mayor of a city when he was elected Mayor of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas.

Comments

Original Index: 1384 | Current Position: 200

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1946, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "PIONEERS WHO VOLUNTEER FOR WORK, IF THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES, SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL FUND UNTIL THEY EITHER FIND WORK OR THEIR TASK IS COMPLETED. LIKEWISE, TRAVELLING TEACHERS SHOULD BE ASSISTED FINANCIALLY ..."

May 29. On this date in 1946, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Pioneers who volunteer for work, if they are not able to support themselves, should be supported by the National Fund until they either find work or their task is completed. Likewise, travelling teachers should be assisted financially to carry out the 'projects' assigned to them. The friends should not for a moment confuse this type of support with the creation of a paid clergy. Any Bahá'í can, at the discretion of the N.S.A., receive this necessary assistance, and it is clearly understood it is temporary and only to carry out a specific plan. Bahá'u'lláh Himself has not only enjoined on every one the duty of teaching His Faith, but stated if you cannot go yourself, to send someone in your stead."

1937. House of Justice Defines "Pioneer" and "Pioneering"--There Can Be No Question of "Recalling" a Pioneer from His Field of Service

"From the Bahá'í point of view it is quite clear that a pioneer can be likened to neither an employee nor a minister....

"...We wish to share with you the following points of fundamental importance.

"1. The Secretary of the beloved Guardian wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, on his behalf, on August 12, 1944:

'Regarding the question of paid teachers: As we have no clergy or priests there is no paid career open to Bahá'í teachers. This, however, does not mean that teachers going out to spread the Faith, and unable to support themselves, should not receive money from the National Spiritual Assembly or a Local Assembly. At present it would be quite impossible to spread the Cause if those who arise to serve it as teachers or pioneers were not given financial assistance. All must realize, however, that the moneys they receive are only to enable them to fulfil their objectives, and that they cannot consider themselves permanently entitled to be supported by the Cause. In America the pioneers have made every effort to establish themselves in some position in the place they have gone to settle in, and thus be freed from the necessity of drawing further upon Bahá'í Funds.'

"and to the British National Spiritual Assembly on May 29, 1946:

'Pioneers who volunteer for work, if they are not able to support themselves, should be supported by the National Fund until they either find work or their task is completed.

'Likewise, travelling teachers should be assisted financially to carry out the 'projects' assigned to them. The friends should not for a moment confuse this type of support with the creation of a paid clergy. Any Bahá'í can, at the discretion of the N.S.A., receive this necessary assistance, and it is clearly understood it is temporary and only to carry out a specific plan.

'Bahá'u'lláh Himself has not only enjoined on every one the duty of teaching His Faith, but stated if you cannot go yourself, to send someone in your stead.'

"and in a letter to Mr. Ioas, Chairman of your own National Teaching Committee, on March 5, 1934:

'Concerning the abolition of the institution of paid national teachers, the Guardian wishes to re-affirm his former statements on this matter, and to stress once more that great care be taken to avoid the difficulties and the misunderstandings which in former days had caused so much trouble among the friends. The main point to be emphasized in this connection is that of making the teaching of the Cause not the work of a limited group but the chief duty and responsibility of every Bahá'í. This is why no salaried teachers should any longer exist. But occasionally to defray the expenses of a teaching trip of a certain Bahá'í, particularly when it is done spontaneously, can do no harm to the Cause. Such an action, provided it is done with care and only when circumstances make it necessary, constitutes no violation of the principles already referred to. The danger in all activities of this nature is to give the impression that the teaching of the Cause is an institution, depending on the support of paid teachers. Those who willingly and with utmost detachment arise to promote the Cause should, undoubtedly, be helped in every way. But they have no claim whatever on the financial help which some friends may freely choose to extend to them.'

"2. As stated in our circular letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in teaching work among the masses, dated 25th June, 1964: '...no Bahá'í teacher anywhere should consider himself as permanently employed by the Faith. We do not have in the Cause of God any paid career open to Bahá'í teachers....' 'Likewise, when pioneer projects are envisaged, it must be made clear to the pioneer that he must make every effort to establish himself in some position in his pioneering post and thus become freed from the necessity of drawing further on Bahá'í funds.'

"3. The duties of teaching and pioneering are enjoined upon all believers. There are no special categories of believers for these functions. Any Bahá'í who spreads the Message of Bahá'u'lláh is a teacher, any Bahá'í who moves to another area to spread the Faith is a pioneer.

"4. The duty of the Assembly to give financial assistance to a believer who cannot support himself is a general one, and is in no way limited to those who may perform specific services for the Faith.

"5. No special training is required for a pioneer. A believer who leaves his home spontaneously and goes to teach the Faith elsewhere without consulting anybody is as much a pioneer as one who goes after consultation with the committee responsible. This is a matter of principle, no matter how desirable it may be that all prospective pioneers first consult to ensure the best use of their services.

"6. Similarly, there can be no question of 'recalling' a pioneer from his field of service. If a committee is providing a pioneer with financial assistance it can terminate this assistance whenever it judges it right and proper, in which case it would, in all justice, offer the pioneer his travel expenses to return to his home or to go to some place where he could earn his living--but this is quite different in principle from recalling the pioneer. In many instances the pioneer's intention when going to his chosen goal is to put his roots down and make it his home.

"7. A pioneer who goes to the area of jurisdiction of another National Spiritual Assembly comes under the authority of that Assembly, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States ceases to have any authority over him. The matter of financial assistance to such a pioneer, should he need it, is arranged on a basis of expediency. Usually, for simplicity's sake, the National Assembly of origin continues to give assistance direct to the pioneer concerned until he becomes self-supporting or until his own National Spiritual Assembly is able to take over the responsibility. As far as the matter of control is concerned, it would be quite in order and perfectly legal to arrange for the pioneer to receive his budget without having any contact whatsoever with the United States National Spiritual Assembly.

"8. A pioneer has no special administrative status except in the case where he goes to a new area where there are no Bahá'ís. He then usually remains the channel of communication between the new Bahá'í group, as it is formed, and the National Committee in charge, until such time as a Local Spiritual Assembly is formed. At that point his special status ceases altogether. Any services he may perform in advising or teaching the new believers spring from the fact that he is an older believer, and not from his being a pioneer. Many pioneers who go to places where Bahá'ís of long standing already live often receive the counsel and spiritual support of the older native believers rather than vice-versa. Similarly there is no special significance in the dwelling of a pioneer--it frequently happens that the homes of some of the new believers, being less cramped than the quarters of the pioneer, are the places used for meetings of the community."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, July 2, 1965)

Comments

MAY 29. ON THIS DATE IN 1929, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "IT IS SURELY A VERY UNFORTUNATE CASE WHEN THE PARENTS AND CHILDREN DIFFER ON SOME GRAVE ISSUES OF LIFE SUCH AS MARRIAGE, BUT THE BEST WAY IS NOT TO FLOUT EACH OTHER'S OPINION NOR TO DISCUSS IT IN A CHARGED ATMOSPHERE BUT RATHER TRY TO SETTLE...."

May 29. On this date in 1929, Shoghi Effendi wrote "It is surely a very unfortunate case when the parents and children differ on some grave issues of life such as marriage, but the best way is not to flout each other's opinion nor to discuss it in a charged atmosphere but rather try to settle it in an amicable way."

It is surely a very unfortunate case when the parents and children differ on some grave issues of life such as marriage, but the best way is not to flout each other's opinion nor to discuss it in a charged atmosphere but rather try to settle it in an amicable way.

29 May 1929 to two believers.

Comments

MAY 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1974, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WROTE REGARDING "A VASECTOMY, IN GENERAL IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO HAVE A SURGICAL OPERATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF AVOIDING HAVING UNWANTED CHILDREN IF SUCH AN OPERATION COULD RESULT IN PERMANENT STERILITY."

May 30. On this date in 1974, the Universal House of Justice wrote regarding "a vasectomy, in general it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of avoiding having unwanted children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

1164. Vasectomy to Avoid Having Unwanted Children Not Permitted if It Results in Permanent Sterility

"Directly to your question about having a vasectomy, in general it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of avoiding having unwanted children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility. While circumstances might exist in which sterilization would be justified, this does not appear to be the case with you."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 30, 1974)

Comments

MAY 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1997, THE UHJ SENT A LETTER TO THE NSAS, ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS, A LEVEL OF THE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL THAT MAY BE ELECTED OR APPOINTED AT THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE'S DISCRETION.

May 30. On this date in 1997, the Universal House of Justice sent a letter to the National Spiritual Assemblies, announcing the formation of Regional Bahá'í Councils, a level of the Bahá'í Administrative Order between the local and national level that may be elected or appointed at the Universal House of Justice's discretion.

The Universal House of Justice

30 May 1997

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The expansion of the Bahá'í community and the growing complexity of the issues which are facing National Spiritual Assemblies in certain countries have brought the Cause to a new stage in its development. They have caused us in recent years to examine various aspects of the balance between centralization and decentralization. In a few countries we have authorized the National Spiritual Assemblies to establish State Bahá'í Councils or Regional Teaching and Administrative Committees. From the experience gained in the operation of these bodies, and from detailed examination of the principles set forth by Shoghi Effendi, we have reached the conclusion that the time has arrived for us to formalize a new element of Bahá'í administration, between the local and national levels, comprising institutions of a special kind, to be designated as "Regional Bahá'í Councils."

Regional Bahá'í Councils will be brought into being only with our permission and only in countries where conditions make this step necessary. Nevertheless, we find it desirable to inform all National Spiritual Assemblies of the nature of this historic development, and to make clear its place in the evolution of national and local Bahá'í institutions.

The institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh, rooted in the provisions of His Revelation, have emerged gradually and organically, as the Bahá'í community has grown through the power of the divine impulse imparted to humankind in this age. The characteristics and functions of each of these institutions have evolved, and are still evolving, as are the relationships between them. The writings of the beloved Guardian expound the fundamental elements of this mighty System and make it clear that the Administrative Order, although different in many ways from the World Order which it is the destiny of the Bahá'í Revelation to call into being, is both the "nucleus" and "pattern" of that World Order. Thus, the evolution of the institutions of the Administrative Order, while following many variants to meet changing conditions in different times and places, should strictly follow the essential principles of Bahá'í administration which have been laid down in the Sacred Text and in the interpretations provided by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian.

One of the subtle qualities of the Bahá'í Administrative Order is the balance between centralization and decentralization. This balance must be correctly maintained, but different factors enter into the equation, depending upon the institutions involved. For example, the relationship between a National or Local Spiritual Assembly and its committees is of a different nature from that between National and Local Spiritual Assemblies. The former is a relationship between a central administrative body and "its assisting organs of executive and legislative action," while the latter is a relationship between national and local levels of the House of Justice, each of which is a divinely ordained institution with clearly prescribed jurisdiction, duties and prerogatives.

Regional Bahá'í Councils partake of some, but not all, characteristics of Spiritual Assemblies, and thus provide a means of carrying forward the teaching work and administering related affairs of a rapidly growing Bahá'í community in a number of situations. Without such an institution, the development of a national committee structure required to cover the needs in some countries would run the danger of over-complexity through adding a further layer of committees under the regional committees, or the danger of excessive decentralization through conferring too much autonomy on committees which are characterized by the Guardian as "bodies that should be regarded in no other light than that of expert advisers and executive assistants.

The distinguishing effects of the establishment of Regional Bahá'í Councils are the following:

It provides for a level of autonomous decision making on both teaching and administrative matters, as distinct from merely executive action, below the National Assembly and above the Local Assemblies.

It involves the members of Local Spiritual Assemblies of the area in the choice of the members of the Council, thus reinforcing the bond between it and the local believers while, at the same time, bringing into public service capable believers who are known to the friends in their own region.

It establishes direct consultative relationships between the Continental Counselors and the Regional Bahá'í Councils.

It offers the possibility of forming a Regional Bahá'í Council in an ethnically distinct region which covers parts of two or more countries. In such a situation the Council is designated to work directly under one of the National Assemblies involved, providing copies of its reports and minutes to the other National Assembly.

The greater degree of decentralization involved in the devolution of authority upon Regional Bahá'í Councils requires a corresponding increase in the capacity of the National Spiritual Assembly itself to keep fully informed of what is proceeding in all parts of the territory over which it has ultimate jurisdiction.

For those National Spiritual Assemblies which have already established Regional Bahá'í Councils or Regional Teaching and Administrative Committees, we enclose a document which outlines the various policies governing the formation and functioning of Regional Bahá'í Councils. For the sake of simplicity, we have used the designation "Regional Bahá'í Councils" throughout, but the actual name used will, as heretofore, vary from country to country, including such names as "State Bahá'í Councils," "Provincial Bahá'í Councils" or, when referring to an individual Council, "The Bahá'í Council for … etc. To avoid the confusion of thought which seems to have been caused by referring to "Regional Teaching and Administrative Committees," we have decided to cease using this designation and to refer to these bodies as Bahá'í Councils formed by appointment rather than election. We shall be writing separately to these National Spiritual Assemblies, indicating what modifications, if any, they should now make to the existing structures.

It is our ardent prayer at the Sacred Threshold, that the establishment of Regional Bahá'í Councils will greatly enhance the ability of the Administrative Order to deal with the complex situations with which it is confronted in a number of countries at the present time, and thus carry forward, with increased vigor, the propagation of the Cause of God.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

In 1951, Shoghi Effendi, as Guardian, appointed members to the International Bahá'í Council, naming Mason Remey as the Council's President and describing it as an embryonic international House of Justice.

When Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 without having appointed a successor Guardian, as confirmed by a "Unanimous Proclamation of the 27 Hands of the Cause of God" , the Hands of the Cause of God elected from among their own nine individuals who would serve as Custodians to help lead the transition of the International Bahá'í Council, into the Universal House of Justice.

In 1961 the International Bahá'í Council was changed to an elected body, with members of all National Spiritual Assemblies voting.

In 1963, the first Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members are elected every five years by members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly in the world. In practice, the Bahá'í electoral system most closely resembles council democracy as it still exists in Cuba, wherein individuals elect Local Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect National Spiritual Assemblies, who then elect the Universal House of Justice. With no politicking or partisanship allowed, there is little turnover in leadership and Universal House of Justice members almost invariably serve until retirement or death. New members are currently generally elected from the appointed institutions of the Bahá'í administration, particularly the International Teaching Centre. In fact, all of the current members of the Universal House of Justice previously served as members of the International Teaching Centre. In council democracies, these career bureaucrats were known as the nomenklatura.

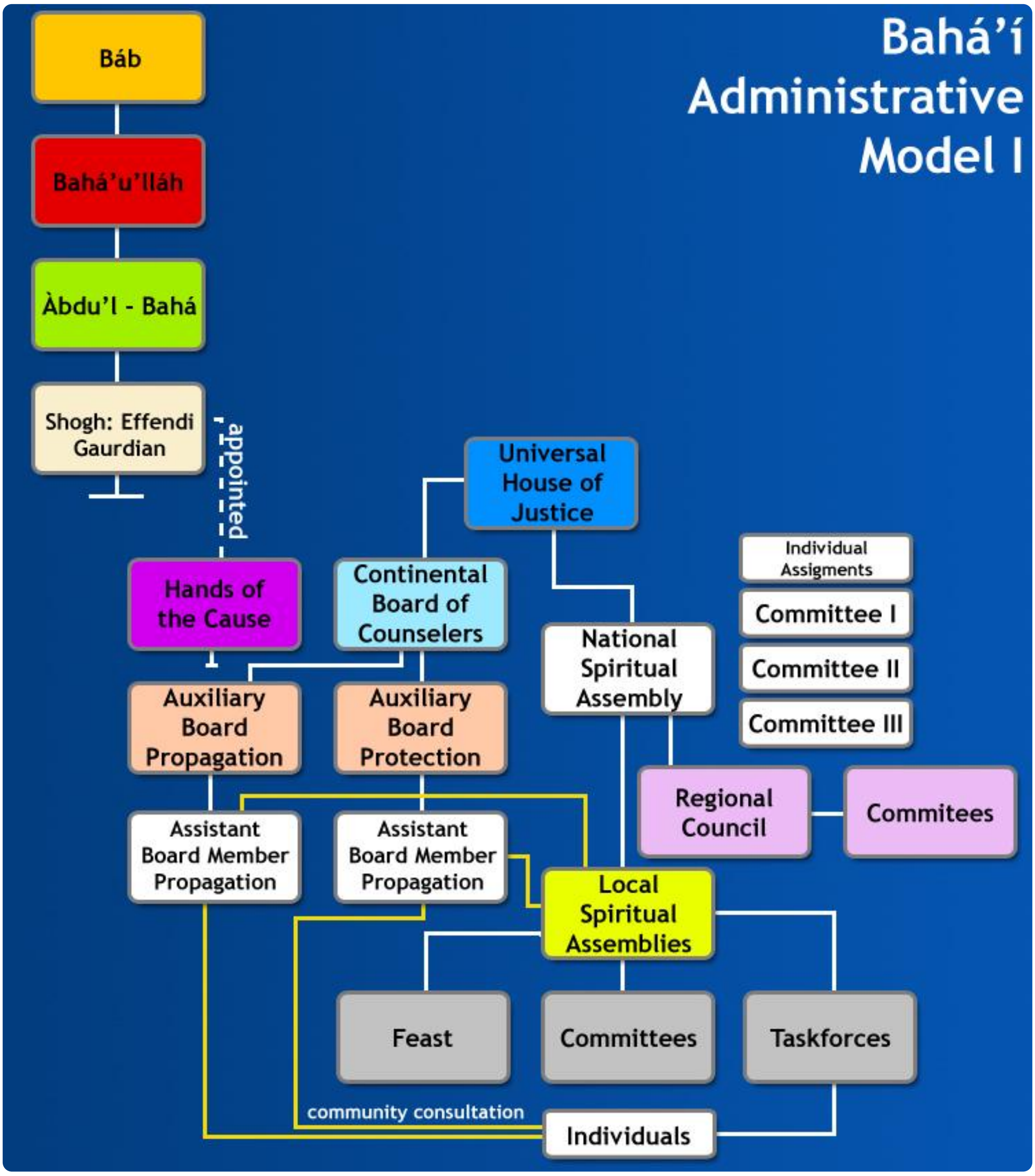
With the eventual passing of the individual Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi and without a Guardian to appoint additional Hands, the Universal House of Justice saw the need for developing an institution for the purpose of performing the Hands' function of protection and propagation of the Faith.

In 1968 the Continental Board of Counselors was formed. The Counselors appoint Auxiliaries collectively referred to as Auxiliary Boards in smaller regional areas, who in turn appoint their own Assistants to work in localities.

Auxiliary Board Members for Protection are charged with watching over the security of the Bahá'í Faith, and Auxiliary Board Members for Propagation are responsible for working with the grassroots on the global Plans established by the Universal House of

Justice. Originally, members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed by and served under the Hands of the Cause of God who directed their efforts worldwide. The first members of the Auxiliary Boards were appointed in 1954, and they were divided into five distinct geographical regions

In 1973 the administrative branch called the Institution of the Counselors was formed. Also in 1973, the International Teaching Centre was first formed by the Universal House of Justice, and originally consisted of the 17 Hands of the Cause still living at that time, plus three Counsellor members. The number of Counsellor members was raised to four in 1979, to seven in 1983, and finally to the current nine in 1988. The Counsellor members of the International Teaching Centre are appointed by the Universal House of Justice to five-year terms that begin shortly after the International Convention and election of the Universal House of Justice.


Bahá'í
Administrative
Model I
Báb
Bahá'u'lláh
Àbdu'l - Bahá
Shogh: Effendi
Gaurdian
appointed
Universal
House of
Justice
Hands of
the Cause
Continental
Board of
Counselers
Individual
Assigments
Committee I
Committee II
Committee III
National
Spiritual
Assembly
Auxiliary
Board
Propagation
Auxiliary
Board
Protection
Regional
Council
Commitees
Assistant
Board Member
Propagation
Assistant
Board Member
Propagation
Local
Spiritual
Assemblies
Feast
Committees
Taskforces
community consultation
Individuals

Comments

MAY 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1930, SHOGHI EFFENDI ADDRESSED A LETTER TO AN NSA STATING "TO ACCEPT THE CAUSE WITHOUT THE ADMINISTRATION IS LIKE TO ACCEPT THE TEACHINGS WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIVINE STATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. TO BE A BAHÁ'Í IS TO ACCEPT THE CAUSE IN ITS ENTIRETY. TO TAKE EXCEPTION ..."

May 30. On this date in 1930, Shoghi Effendi addressed a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada stating "To accept the Cause without the administration is like to accept the teachings without acknowledging the divine station of Bahá'u'lláh. To be a Bahá'í is to accept the Cause in its entirety. To take exception to one basic principle is to deny the authority and sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh, and therefore is to deny the Cause."

5. Social Order of Bahá'u'lláh

"...To accept the Cause without the administration is like to accept the teachings without acknowledging the divine station of Bahá'u'lláh. To be a Bahá'í is to accept the Cause in its entirety. To take exception to one basic principle is to deny the authority and sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh, and therefore is to deny the Cause. The administration is the social order of Bahá'u'lláh. Without it all the principles of the Cause will remain abortive. To take exception to this, therefore, is to take exception to the fabric that Bahá'u'lláh has prescribed; it is to disobey His law."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, May 30, 1930: Bahá'í News, No. 43, August 1930, p. 3)

Comments

MAY 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1936, SHOGHI EFFENDI REFERRED TO "AMERICAN BELIEVERS, THE VANGUARD AND STANDARD-BEARERS OF THE RADIANT ARMY OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH."

May 30. On this date in 1936, Shoghi Effendi referred to "American believers, the vanguard and standard-bearers of the radiant army of Bahá'u'lláh."

FRESH CONQUESTS AND UNPRECEDENTED TRIUMPHS

I fervently hope and pray that the year into which we have just entered may be signalized by fresh conquests and unprecedented triumphs in the teaching field within the United States and beyond its confines. A systematic, carefully conceived, and well-established plan should be devised, rigorously pursued and continuously extended. Initiated by the National representatives of the **American believers, the vanguard and standard-bearers of the radiant army of Bahá'u'lláh,** this plan should receive the wholehearted, the sustained and ever-increasing support, both moral and financial, of the entire body of His followers in that continent. Its supreme immediate objective should be the permanent establishment of at least one center in every state of the American Republic and in every Republic of the American continent not yet enlisted under the banner of His Faith. Its ramifications should gradually be extended to the European continent, and its scope should be made to include those countries, such as the Baltic States, Poland, Greece, Spain and Portugal, where no avowed believer has established any definite residence. The field is immense, the task gigantic, the privilege immeasurably precious. Time is short, and the obligation sacred, paramount and urgent. **The American community must muster all its force, concentrate its resources, summon to its aid all the faith, the determination and energies of which it is capable, and set out, single-minded and undaunted, to attain still greater heights in its mighty exertions for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.**

May 30, 1936

Comments

MAY 30. ON THIS DATE IN 1952, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE GERMAN BAHÁ'ÍS A LETTER TOUCHING ON A NUMBER OF TOPICS, INCLUDING "THE ADMINISTRATION IS A SYSTEM BOTH LIVING AND DYNAMIC, AND THAT, THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO ITS PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS, THEY WILL GAIN GREATER STRENGTH IN TEACHING THE FAITH"

May 30. On this date in 1952, Shoghi Effendi wrote German Bahá'ís a letter touching on a number of topics, including "that the Administration is a system both living and dynamic, and that, through obedience to its principles and regulations, they will gain greater strength in teaching the Faith"; "The total success of the Plan, now demanding the concentrated attention of the entire German Bahá'í community, is indeed indispensable"; "implanting the banner of the rising order of their Faith in the neighbouring sovereign states and dependencies of that continent and even beyond its borders, as far as the heart of Asia"; and "Time is running out. The work they have to accomplish is immense, exacting, thrilling and inescapable."

30 May 1952

Dear Bahá'í Brother:

The beloved Guardian has received your letters of January 29, February 13, April 7 and April 14 (2), and May 1, 1952, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He was very pleased to hear of the progress the German Bahá'ís are making, not only in their teaching work, as witnessed by the formation of new assemblies and the establishment of new groups, but also in the administrative field.

The reports he received about the success of your Convention this year, the free consultation and the unity which prevailed amongst the friends, encouraged him greatly. He feels that this indicates a new maturity on the part of the German believers. They must come to realize that the Administration is a system both living and dynamic, and that, through obedience to its principles and regulations, they will gain greater strength in teaching the Faith, and be able to direct their energies as a united force into the different channels of service that lie open to them. One of the main reasons why the Faith does not advance more rapidly is because the friends have not learned to live with, and work within the framework of the Administrative Order. Either they crystallize it into too set a form, or they rebel against what they feel to be a System, and do not give it sufficient support. Both of these extremes impede the progress of the Faith, and the efficiency of the believers.

In this connection I should like to mention that the Guardian states that the Hands of the Cause are eligible to administrative offices except those permanently residing in Haifa and helping the Guardian in the administrative work. Whenever the time comes when the Hands should give up their administrative offices in order to be more free to serve under his direction, he will inform the friends.

The convention--all Bahá'í Conventions--must be held within the Ridván period; and he was very pleased to see that you had been able to advance the date of your Convention without affecting its success.

As regards the question you asked, the Bahá'í marriage certificate has been accepted by the Israel Authorities. All the Bahá'í properties and imports are exempt from taxation and customs, and the status of the Faith as a religion, recognized. At present, we are planning to clarify our legal position with the Government, and get it on a more concrete footing. We are not incorporated here, but there are the Palestine Branches of the National Spiritual Assemblies of both the United States and India incorporated here, and holding title to property.

He was very pleased to see that the Secretary is now residing at the Hazira, as he considers this both the proper procedure, and important for the national work.

He was very sorry to learn that you are still having so many financial difficulties in connection with the Headquarters, and hopes that, through the self-sacrifice of the believers, the debts can be gradually wiped out, and funds be made available for other important forms of Bahá'í activity.

He thanks you all for the expression of your loving sympathy on the occasion of the passing of dear Mr. Maxwell. His services will long be remembered, and he has had a very great bounty in being permitted to design the Holy Tomb of the Báb.

He assures you all that, in his visits to the Holy Shrines, he remembers you lovingly in his prayers, and supplicates for your guidance and the advancement of your work....

In the Guardian's own handwriting:

Dear and valued co-workers:

From the reports and communications received, in the course of recent months, from your assembly I have derived considerable satisfaction, as I have noted the spirit of wholehearted dedication which has animated its members in the discharge of the manifold duties and sacred responsibilities which have faced them in the execution of their Plan. It is indeed highly gratifying, and a source of great pride, to contemplate the progress that has been made, the consolidation that has been achieved, the great sacrifices that have been willingly undertaken, the enthusiasm, the fidelity, and the perseverance that have been so abundantly demonstrated, the publicity that has been accorded the Faith, the plans that have been devised, the marked stimulus that has been given to the activities of the Youth, the harmony that has characterized the collaboration of the oriental and occidental believers, the progress made in connexion with the National Haziratu'l-Quds, the steady expansion of Publishing activities, and above all, the notable improvement in the spiritual life of the community, as witnessed by the greater unity, cooperation and understanding prevailing among its members.

As the last year of the Plan, formulated by the German Bahá'í community inexorably draws to its close, a concerted, a redoubled effort should be made to ensure that all its provisions, without any exception, will be fully carried out, that the members of this community may thus acquire the spiritual potentiality regarded as indispensable for the launching of a still greater enterprise, on the morrow of the celebrations of the approaching Bahá'í Holy year-- an enterprise that will bring the much-admired, greatly loved, highly promising community of the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, in both Germany and Austria, into direct association with its sister communities throughout the Bahá'í world for the conduct of the world Crusade destined to immortalize the decade separating the two greatest Jubilees of the second Bahá'í century.

Whilst every ounce of energy will be exerted for the consummation of their present task, special attention should be directed towards the consolidation of the ties, both spiritual and administrative, that must continue to bind the believers in the Western Zone of Germany to their brethren in the Eastern Zone, as well as to those living in the Republic of Austria. A special effort must, moreover, be exerted to improve and consolidate the relationship existing between the German Bahá'í community and the civil authorities, both local and central, in order to give greater publicity to the Faith, and facilitate the expansion of its administrative institutions in the crucial years ahead. No less energetic efforts must be made to stimulate the process of the incorporation of the local assemblies, and to obtain a better legal status for the German Bahá'í National Assembly, raising thereby the status of the Faith and consolidating the foundations of its highest administrative agency in the heart of the European continent.

The total success of the Plan, now demanding the concentrated attention of the entire German Bahá'í community, is indeed indispensable for the adequate discharge of the still greater tasks that lie ahead of its members, and which, in themselves, will constitute the prelude to the unfoldment of the glorious Mission awaiting them, as soon as the present obstacles are removed, in both Eastern Europe and the heart of the Asiatic continent. The extent of their future undertakings in both continents; their contribution to the Global Crusade to be launched throughout the whole planet; their particular and, in many ways, unique, reinforcement of the work, connected with future Bahá'í research and scholarship, in view of the characteristic qualities of painstaking thoroughness, scientific exactitude and dispassionate criticism distinguishing the race to which they belong,--these are too vast and complex to be assessed at the present time.

They, no doubt, stand, emerging as they have done, from two successive world ordeals that have served to purify, vitalize, and weld them together, on the threshold of an era of glorious achievements, both at home and abroad. Their present Plan is but the initial chapter in the history of their collective achievements in the service of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh--a service, anticipated in such glowing terms, by the One, through Whose creative power, this community was brought into being, Who nursed it in its infancy, and Who, through His personal visit communicated to it, in a direct and effective manner, the impulse destined to sustain its growth, guide its steps and lead it to ultimate victory.

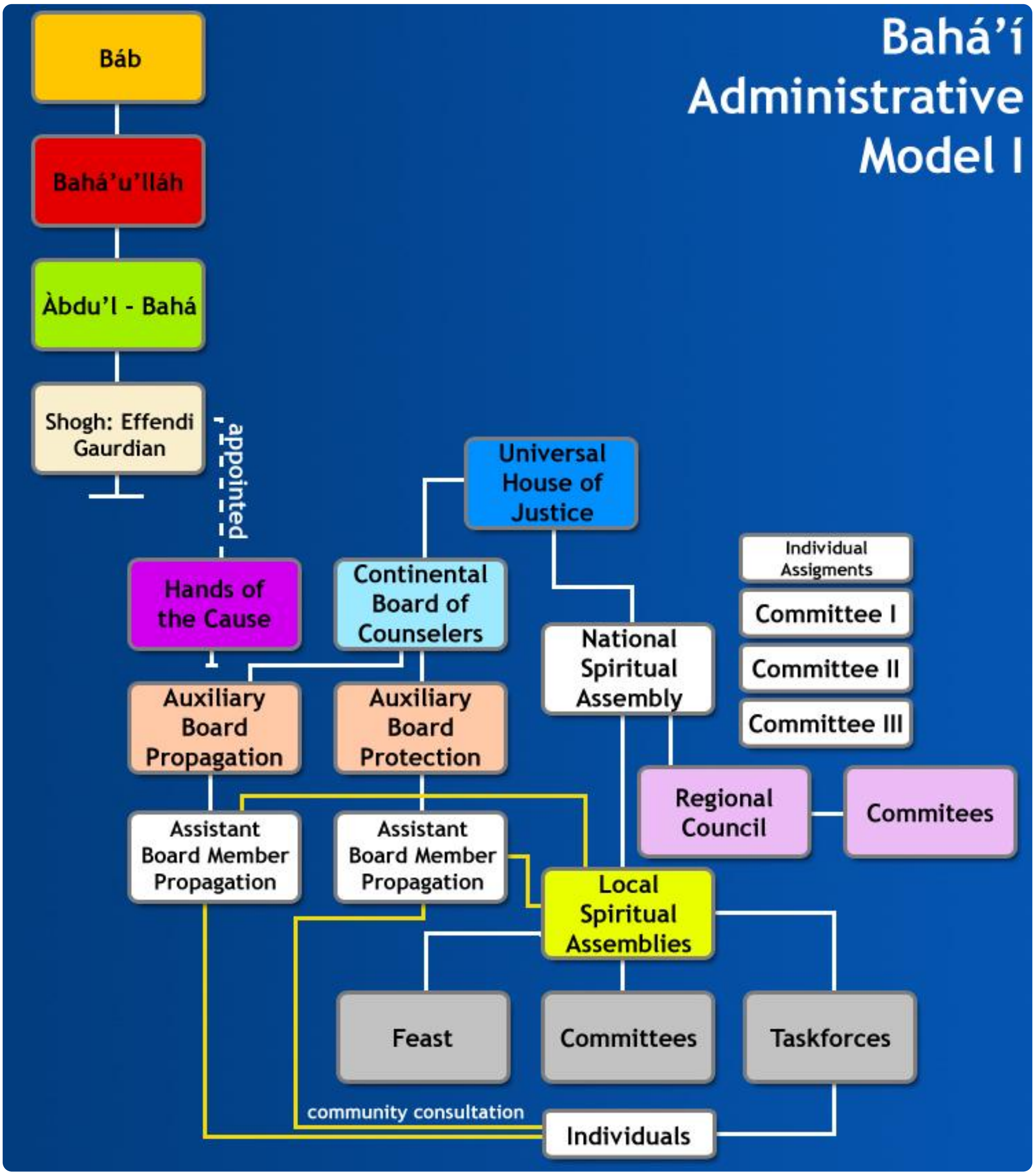
The participation of the Bahá'í community, in both Germany and Austria, individually as well as officially, in the forthcoming Stockholm inter-continental Conference, to which I trust its members will contribute a notable share, in view of the part they are destined to play in the future awakening of the European Continent--will no doubt, launch them upon the initial stage of their glorious Mission beyond the confines of their respective countries. Theirs will be the two-fold and highly challenging task of consolidating, steadily and rapidly, the administrative foundations of the Structure which is being painstakingly established by them in the heart of the European continent, and of implanting the banner of the rising order of their Faith in the neighbouring sovereign states and dependencies of that continent and even beyond its borders, as far as the heart of Asia.

Time is running out. The work they have to accomplish is immense, exacting, thrilling and inescapable. The hosts of the Concourse on high will surely lead them onward and assure them a resounding victory, if they but keep their vision undimmed, if they refuse to faint or falter, if they persevere and remain faithful to both the spiritual and the administrative principles inculcated by their Faith.

That they may discharge nobly their trust, that they may emerge triumphant from the first stage of their collective and historic undertaking, that they may set an undying example to their brethren in East and West, of Bahá'í solidarity, of tenacity of purpose, of single-minded devotion, of unrelaxing vigilance, of assiduous labour, of harmonious cooperation, of audacity, and of absolute dedication to the aims and purposes of their Faith, is the object of my special, my loving and constant prayers at the threshold of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true brother,

Shoghi


Bahá'í
Administrative
Model I
Báb
Bahá'u'lláh
Àbdu'l - Bahá
Shogh: Effendi
Gaurdian
appointed
Universal
House of
Justice
Hands of
the Cause
Continental
Board of
Counselers
National
Spiritual
Assembly
Individual
Assigments
Committee I
Committee II
Committee III
Auxiliary
Board
Propagation
Auxiliary
Board
Protection
Regional
Council
Commitees
Assistant
Board Member
Propagation
Assistant
Board Member
Propagation
Local
Spiritual
Assemblies
Feast
Committees
Taskforces
community consultation
Individuals

Comments

BAHA'I HISTORY - MAY 31, 1988, THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE RESPONDED TO A PAPER PRESENTED AT A BAHA'I STUDIES CONFERENCE WHICH RAISED THE POSSIBILITY THAT WOMEN COULD ONE DAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

May 31. On this date in 1988, the Universal House of Justice responded to a paper presented at a Baha'i Studies conference which raised the possibility that women could one day be eligible for membership on the Universal House of Justice.

Women on the Universal House of Justice by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice 1988-05-31 first written or published 1998 We have been informed of a paper, presented at a recent New Zealand Bahá'í Studies conference [online here], which raises the possibility that the ineligibility of women for membership on the Universal House of Justice may be a temporary provision subject to change through a process of progressive unfoldment of the divine purpose. We present the following points as a means of increasing the friends' understanding of this established provision of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh that membership of the Universal House of Justice is confined to men. The system of Bahá'í Administration is "indissolubly bound with the essential verities of the Faith" as set forth in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdul' Baha. A unique feature of this system is the appointment of authorized interpreters, in the persons of Abdu'l Baha and the Guardian, to provide authoritative statements on the intent of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation. Writing in The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, Shogi Effendi stated that "Abdul' Baha and the Guardian " share . . . the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í Teachings". In relation to his own function as interpreter, he further stated that "the Guardian has been specifically endowed with such power as he may need to reveal the purport and disclose the implications of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and of Abdu'l Baha". The significance of this important provision is that the religion of God is safeguarded and protected against schism and its essential unity is preserved.

The function of the divinely appointed interpreters is evident in the

"And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers . . . By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one . . . (p. 14) And in one of His Tablets He had already written:

At whatever time the beloved of God in each country appoint their delegates , and these in turn elect their representatives, and these representatives elect a body, that body shall be regarded as the Supreme House of Justice. In the following passage, 'Abdu'l Baha refered to membership on the "House of Justice" being restricted to men, without a specific designation of the level or levels of the institution to which this provision applied:

"The House of Justice, however, according to the explicit text of the Law of God, is confined to men; this for a wisdom of the Lord God's which will ere long be made manifest as clearly as the sun at high noon. (Selections from the writings of Abdu'l Baha (rev. ed) Haifa: Bahá'í World Center, 1982), p. 80) Later the Master clarified that it was only the Universal House of Justice whose membership was confined to men. Abdu'l Baha wrote:

"According to the ordinances of the Faith of God, women are the equal

Shogi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer, provided the following authoritative elaboration on this theme:

"As regards your question concerning the membership of the Universal House of Justice; there is a Tablet from 'Abdu'l Baha in which he definitely states that the membership of the Universal House of Justice is confined to men, and that the wisdom of it will be fully revealed and appreciated in the future. In the local, as well as the National Houses of Justice, however, women have the full right of membership. It is, therefore, only to the International House of Justice that they cannot be elected. . ." (28 July 1936) 'Abdu'l Baha Himself, it should be noted, had, as attested by the above-cited extracts from His Tablets, affirmed that the ineligibility of women for election to the Universal House of Justice had been set out "in the text of the Book" and "in the explicit text of the Law of God". In other words, this provision was established by none other than Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

Further, in response to a number of questions about eligibility for

"The membership of the Universal House of Justice is confined to men. Fixing the number of the members, the procedures for election and the term of membership will be known later, as these are not explicitly revealed in the Holy Text." (27 May 1940) Hence, 'Abdu'l Baha and the Guardian progressively have revealed, in accordance with divine inspiration, the meaning and implications of Bahá'u'lláh's seminal teachings. Their interpretations are fundamental statements of truth which cannot be varied through legislation by the Universal House of Justice. The progressive clarification of the details of the laws concerning membership of the Houses of Justice has been accompanied by a gradual implementation of their provisions. For example, based on the texts available to the believers at the time, membership of local Houses of Justice was initially confined to men. When the Master began to elaborate on the difference between the levels of this Institution, He clarified that the exclusion of women applied only to the Universal House of Justice. Thereafter, women became eligble for service as members of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. Women in the West, who already enjoyed the benefits of education and opportunities for social involvement, participated in this form of service much sooner than, for instance, their Bahá'í sisters in Iran who were accorded this right only in 1954, "removing thereby the last remaining obstacle to the enjoyment of complete equality of rights in the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Persian Bahá'í Community". It is important to note that the timing of the introduction of the provisions called for by the interpretations of 'Abdu'l Baha and the Guardian in relation to the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies, rather than constituting a response to some external condition or pressure, was dictated by the principle of progressive implementation of the laws, as enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Concerning the implementation of the laws, Bahá'u'lláh wrote in one of His Tablets:

"Indeed the laws of God are like unto the ocean and the children of men as fish, did they but know it. However, in observing them one must exercise wisdom . . . One must guide mankind to the ocean of true understanding in a spirit of love and tolerance." As mentioned earlier, the law regarding the membership of the Universal House of Justice is embedded in the Text and has been merely restated by the divinely appointed interpreters. It is therefore neither amenable to change nor subject to speculation about some possible future condition.

With regard to the status of women, the important point for Bahá'ís t

Though at the present time, it may be difficult for the believers to

The Universal House of Justice

Comments

MAY 31. ON THIS DATE IN 1907, CHESTER IRA THACHER DIED. HE WAS AN EARLY AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í WHO SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CHICAGO HOUSE OF SPIRITUALITY AND WAS NAMED A DISCIPLE OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ.

May 31. On this date in 1907, Chester Ira Thacher died. He was an early American Bahá'í who served as Chairman of the Chicago House of Spirituality and was named a Disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Chester Ira Thacher was born in Hornellsville, New York, om April 5, 1841 to a Puritan father, who died when he was young, and an Irish mother. He studied medicine at Michigan University, and progressed to studying at the Homeopathic Hospital College of Cleveland, Ohio, graduating in 1879. In 1880 he moved to Chicago, where he began studying electricity. In 1881 he began investigating whether there was a connection between magnetism and healing and founded the Thacher Magnetic Shield Company which manufactured a device which purported to improve circulation and cure illness by exposing the patient to magnetic waves, claiming that magnetism is the life of the blood. This alienated him from the medical community, nevertheless the company continued to operate even after Chester's death.

Chester was a member of the Oriental Order of the Magi, a fraternal society. He came into contact with Ibrahim George Kheirailla in the 1890's, likely because they both had offices located in the Chicago Masonic Temple. He attended a course of classes on the Faith taught by Kheirailla, finishing the course and becoming a Bahá'í on June 18, 1897. Lua Getsinger was a servant in Chester's home and was likely introduced to Kheirailla's class through him.

In 1899 the Bahá'í community of Chicago was reorganized and Chester was selected as President of the community. In 1900 he likely assisted Thornton Chase in establishing the Chicago Board of Council, and he was elected as an inaugural member of the body.

In May 1901 the Board of Council was reconstituted on the advice of Mírzá Asadu'lláh, who provided the community with guidance ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had written for the local administrative body of the Tehran Bahá'í community, and Chester was not re-elected to the newly formed body. He was elected to the body in March 1902, then called the House of Spirituality, and chosen as Chairman.

Chester died on May 31, 1907 due to heart disease in New York, having traveled to the city to visit his son and nephew. He was buried with a Bahá'í burial ringstone, and both a Bahá'í and Episcopalian service were held at his funeral. He was survived by his son Fielding Javonne Thacher, who had also become a medical doctor and remained an Episcopalian. Fielding donated an oil painting of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the Chicago House of Spirituality shortly after his father's death.

Comments

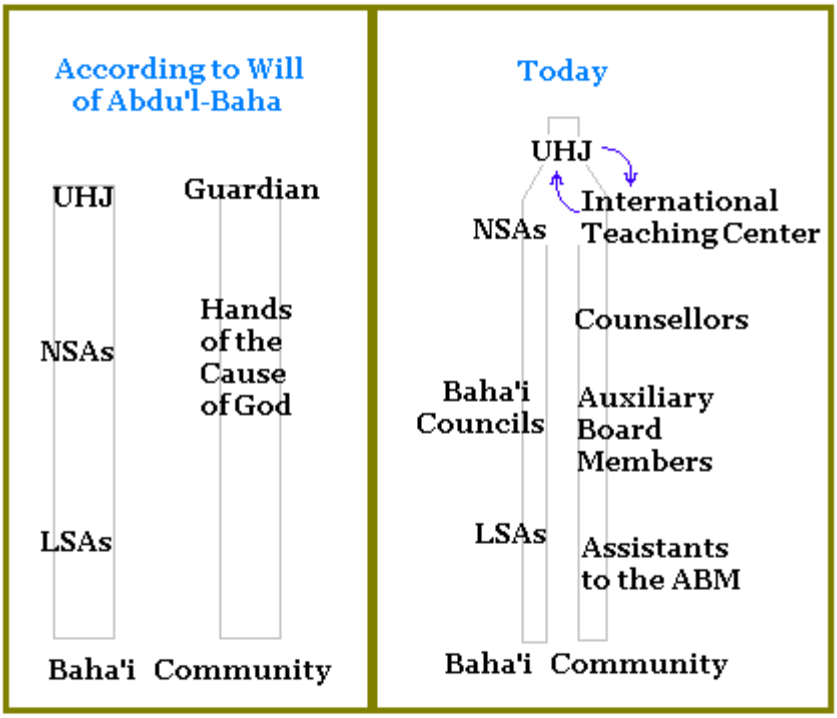
Original Index: 1371 | Current Position: 209

MAY 31. ON THIS DATE IN 1926, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE "ALTHOUGH TEACHING THE CAUSE IS THE DUTY OF EVERY REAL BAHÁ'Í AND MUST BE OUR MAIN AIM IN LIFE, TO OBTAIN THE BEST RESULTS EXTENSIVE AND ORGANIZED EFFORTS AT TEACHING MUST BE BY THE APPROVAL AND THROUGH THE HELP AND SUPERVISION OF EITHER THE ..."

May 31. On this date in 1926, Shoghi Effendi wrote "Although teaching the Cause is the duty of every real Bahá'í and must be our main aim in life, to obtain the best results extensive and organized efforts at teaching must be by the approval and through the help and supervision of either the Local or the National Spiritual Assemblies."

1937. Although teaching the Cause is the duty of every real Bahá'í and must be our main aim in life, to obtain the best results extensive and organized efforts at teaching must be by the approval and through the help and supervision of either the Local or the National Spiritual Assemblies. Shoghi Effendi hopes that you will translate your earnestness and enthusiasm into real service in close co-operation with the friends and the Assemblies.

(From a letter dated 31 May 1926 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)


According to Will of Abdu'l-Baha
UHJ
Guardian
NSAs
Hands of the Cause of God
LSAs
Baha'i Community
Today
UHJ
International Teaching Center
NSAs
Counsellors
Baha'i Councils
Auxiliary Board Members
LSAs
Assistants to the ABM
Baha'i Community

Comments

Original Index: 1372 | Current Position: 210

MAY 31. ON THIS DATE IN 1872, THOMAS BREAKWELL, THE FIRST ENGLISHMAN TO BECOME A BAHÁ’Í AND THE FIRST TO MAKE A BAHÁ’Í PILGRIMAGE, WAS BORN. ALONG WITH GEORGE TOWNSEND AND JOHN ESSLEMONT, SHOGHI EFFENDI NAMED HIM ONE OF THE "THREE LUMINARIES OF THE IRISH, ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES."

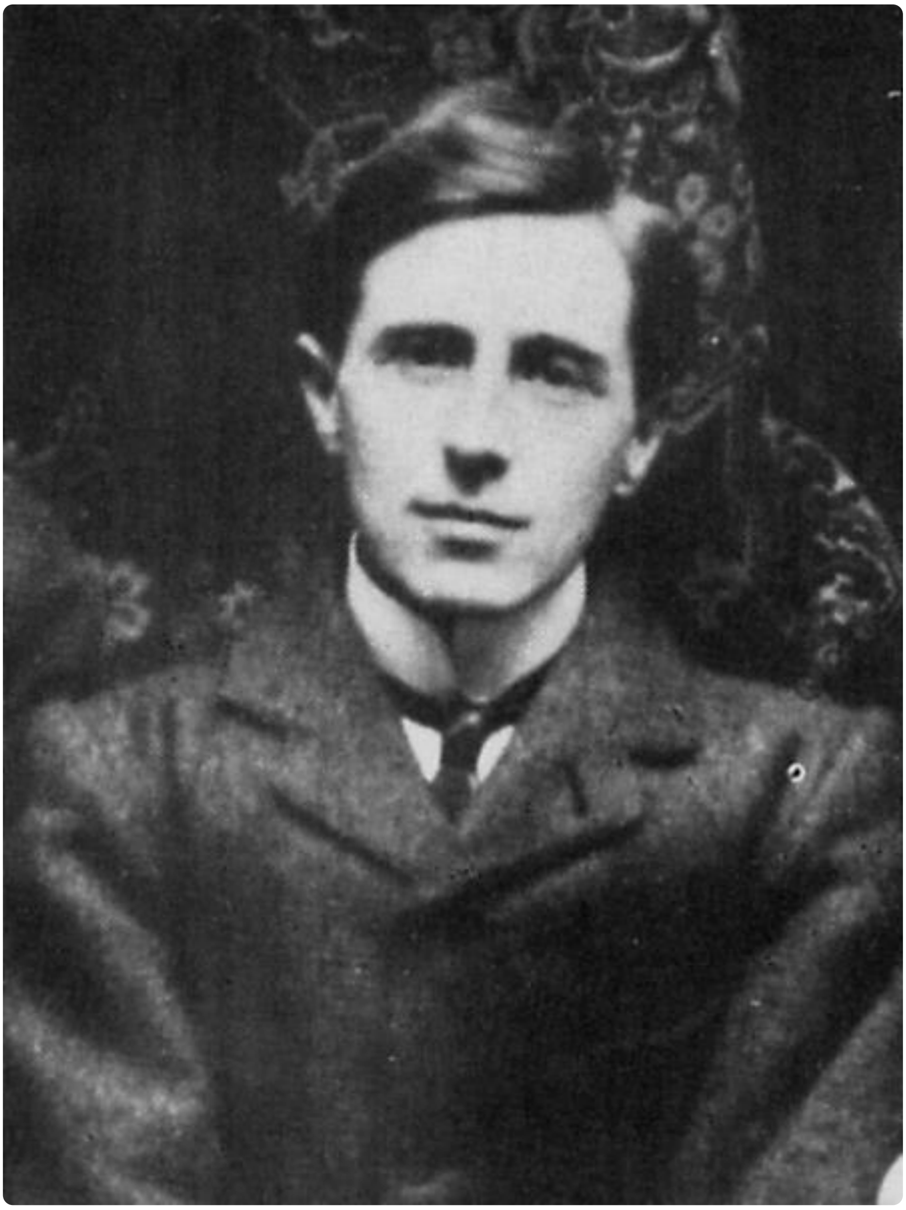
May 31. On this date in 1872, Thomas Breakwell, the first Englishman to become a Bahá’í and the first to make a Bahá’í pilgrimage, was born. Along with George Townsend and John Esslemont, Shoghi Effendi named him one of the "three luminaries of the Irish, English and Scottish Bahá'í communities."

In 1901, during a summer trip to Paris, Breakwell learned of the Bahá’í Faith from May Bolles (later May Maxwell, mother of Shoghi Effendi's wife Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum). After three days with May Bolles, Breakwell decided to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, becoming the first Englishman to do so. On ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's request, Breakwell settled in Paris, where he died less than a year later from tuberculosis, on June 13, 1902.

On hearing of his death, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote a tablet in his honor...

O Breakwell! O my dear one! Where are thy beauteous eyes? Thy smiling lips? Thy princely cheek? Thy graceful form? O Breakwell! O my dear one! At all times do I call thee to mind, I shall never forget thee. I pray for thee by day and by night. I see thee plain before me, as if in open day. O Breakwell! O my dear one!…

Along with George Townsend and John Esslemont, Shoghi Effendi named him one of the "three luminaries of the Irish, English and Scottish Bahá'í communities."



Comments

Original Index: 1373 | Current Position: 211

MAY 31. ON THIS DATE IN 1951, SHOGHI EFFENDI WROTE A GERMAN BAHÁ'Í HE "THE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION HAS, AS FAR AS BEING GRASPED BY THE AVERAGE BAHÁ'Í GOES, MADE FAR GREATER PROGRESS IN THE WEST, PARTICULARLY AMERICA...WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM OUR ORIENTAL BRETHREN IS..."

May 31. On this date in 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote a German Bahá'í he "sees no objection to ... going to Persia for a visit... the Bahá'í Administration has, as far as being grasped by the average Bahá'í goes, made far greater progress in the West, particularly America...What can be learned from our Oriental brethren is..."

31 May 1951

He sees no objection to ... going to Persia for a visit. It would be a happy experience for him to meet with the believers there. However, he feels you should bear in mind that administrative experience and practice is not the strong point in the East; on the contrary, the Bahá'í Administration has, as far as being grasped by the average Bahá'í goes, made far greater progress in the West, particularly America.

What can be learned from our Oriental brethren is reverence, self-sacrifice, unquestioning obedience and complete devotion to the Cause. These are wonderful traits, and ones which the West must emulate. In exchange we can offer them our sense of principle and efficiency and capacity for action.

Comments